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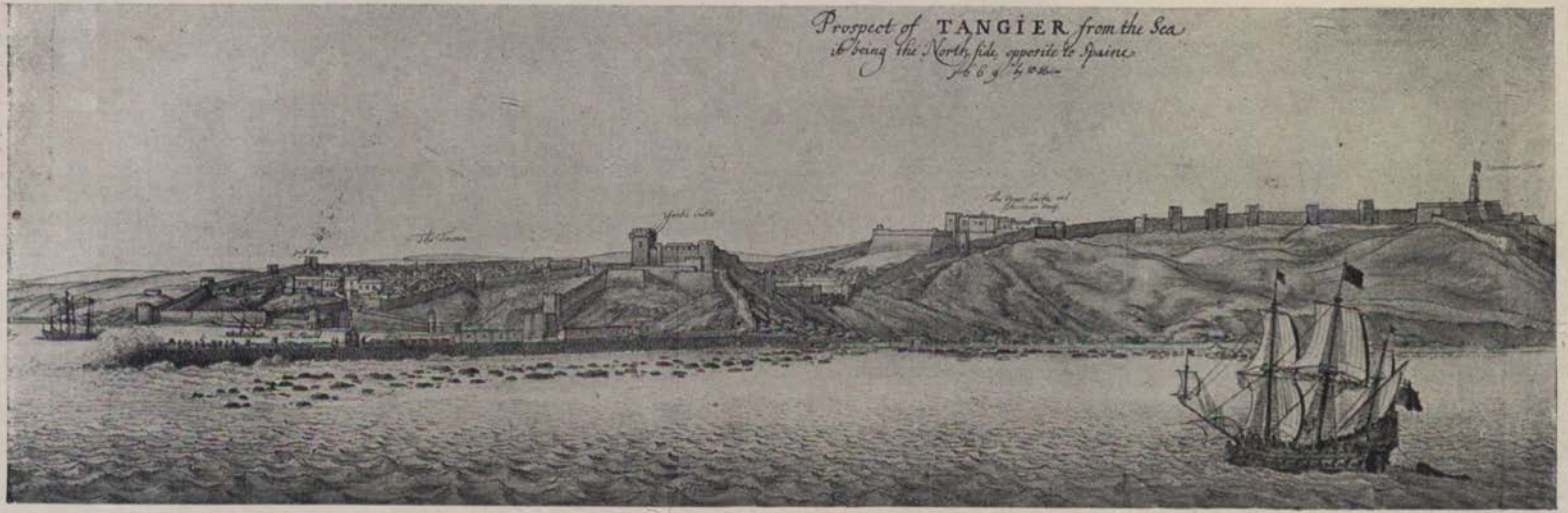

TANGIER IN 1669

REDUCED FROM PART OF AN ORIGINAL DRAWING BY WENCESLAUS HOLLAR
IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM

ENGLAND
IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

A STUDY OF THE RISE AND INFLUENCE OF BRITISH POWER WITHIN THE STRAITS

1603-1713

BY

JULIAN S. CORBETT

AUTHOR OF

'DRAKE AND THE TUDOR NAVY' 'THE SUCCESSORS OF DRAKE' ETC.

IN TWO VOLUMES

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ENGLAND IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

VOL. II.

CHAPTER XIX

DUNKIRK AND TANGIER

It has come to be the received opinion that Cromwell's influence on English history was almost wholly negative. He broke down much that cumbered the ground, but of the structure he strove to raise on the ruins practically nothing, it is said, survived him. In all that concerns society, government, and religion, there is so much to support the judgment that it will probably stand, yet it is far from giving the whole truth. If it were applied to foreign affairs, so far from being just, it would involve a serious omission. In all that concerned the British attitude to the outside world he changed much and left much behind him. He found his country impotent and neglected in the councils of Europe, and taught her how to speak with a commanding voice. He gave her, in the first place, the instrument —a perfected navy in the true modern sense—a navy of war ships wholly independent of merchant auxiliaries—a thing which had never yet been seen in modern times. It was a stride as great as that which Drake and his fellows made when they perfected a sailing navy, and the results for England were no less invigorating. But Cromwell gave still more. He gave the sentiment for using the instrument. For he bequeathed to the restored monarchy a definite naval policy in the Mediterranean and an indestructible ambition for what we now call imperial politics.

The two things were intimately connected. It has been said that Cromwell's war with Spain was an Elizabethan war, conceived on Elizabethan lines; but this is not wholly true. There was a difference, and one of great importance. Cromwell's main strategical idea, like that of the Elizabethans, was to operate against the American colonies

and Oceanic trade of Spain; but, unlike theirs, it contemplated as a condition precedent the covering of those operations by the seizure of the Straits of Gibraltar and the domination of the Mediterranean. The design was also to be enforced by a close alliance with Portugal that came near to being a protectorate, and had a shrewd eye to the gradual insinuation of England into her place in the Far East. But this too was an Elizabethan idea. The main distinction of Cromwell's conception was that Mediterranean power lay at the root of it. It is true, as we have seen, that although he never let go this conception altogether, it fell to a subordinate place; but this was when his religious zeal boiled to the surface and disturbed the level flow of his more practical and sagacious line of thought. When he saw a chance of leading a great Protestant war on Rome, his imperial policy lost its clearness, and the result was the occupation of Dunkirk instead of Gibraltar. Still it was but an aberration—a temporary reaction to an obsolete policy, which even Elizabeth had regarded with suspicion, and which had no real vitality. The visionary aim of the zealot died with him, and the master current he had found resumed its flow. In this way at least, if in no other, his imprint remained and still remains sharp and undefaced upon British polity.

When Stoakes and his fleet were recalled in the summer of 1659, it might have seemed that the situation which had been created in the Mediterranean was going to perish with the rest of the Protector's work. But it was not so; and of such vigour was the seed he had sown, that, though almost everything else was being changed or uprooted, this plant sprang up again with new exuberance. For awhile indeed there was no sign it was not dead. The republic was in its agony. Revolution succeeded revolution, and government government in rapid succession, and in the eyes of continental diplomacy England was once more a quantity to be neglected. Upon Pheasant Island in the Bidasoa the French and Spaniard laboriously concluded the treaty of the Pyrenees, with no regard to her or her interests. In the interminable list of articles, which were

finally agreed upon, everything was provided against for a century to come, as though the future of Europe lay entirely with France and Spain, and England's power to interfere had passed away. Yet the ink, as it were, was hardly dry when England was seen again standing with Cromwell's weapon in her hand, and both the great powers were once more feverishly bidding for her good-will.

In the famous treaty of the Pyrenees, Spain had found herself compelled to give way at every point where Mazarin pressed her. It was a complete triumph for France. With Portugal in revolt, and declaring itself once more an independent kingdom, it was impossible for Spain to resist the pressure that was put upon her. It was for the sake of reconquering Portugal that she submitted to the humiliating conditions and the losses of territory that were forced upon her. The height of her greatness had dated from the time when, in 1580, Philip II. seized the vacant throne of Lisbon, and found himself, for the first time, a great power upon the ocean. With the loss of the Tagus and the Portuguese marine by the revolt of the Braganzas in 1640, the real troubles of Spain had begun, and it was clear to the Court that without Portugal her position could never be recovered. On the question of Portugal therefore she had been adamant, and Mazarin, who had been vigorously supporting the revolt throughout, found himself compelled to abandon his *protégé*. Portugal seemed doomed. In despair an ambassador flew to England to try to renew with the new revolutionary Government Cromwell's old alliance. He found everything in confusion, and it was not till Monk had dominated all the warring factions, and was sitting like an uncrowned king in Whitehall, that he found a ray of hope. It was a time when, to all who could read the signs, the monarchy seemed unexpectedly on the brink of a restoration. It is true Monk had absolutely refused to have anything to do with the Stuart exiles. His single purpose was to preserve order with a rod of iron, so that none of the revolutionary elements could gain the upper hand, and to

hold the balance true till a free Parliament could be elected to voice the will of the country. Every day it became clearer that that voice would be a summons to the King to return, and every day the desperation of the more intractable elements became more difficult to control. Monk and his advisers began to doubt whether it would be possible for them to preserve their neutral attitude till Parliament could meet, and it was at this moment that the Portuguese Ambassador saw his chance.

It had been an old idea of the Braganzas, dating back to the earliest days of their rebellion, to seek support for their cause in wedding a daughter of the House with the Prince of Wales. So long as the English monarchy kept its head above water, the project had never been lost sight of, and now that the Stuart star was once more rising to the ascendant it was immediately revived.[1] In the Portuguese Court there can have been little doubt as to the bait that should be offered. The two treaties of commerce, which England had already concluded with the new kingdom, sufficiently revealed the English desire for a share of the East Indian trade; and when, after Cromwell's abandonment of the Gibraltar project, his covering fleet had been compelled to base itself on Lisbon, every one must have known what longing eyes England was casting on a naval station in the Straits. Bombay in the Far East, and Tangier, the last of the Portuguese possessions in North Africa, must have naturally suggested themselves. The price was a large one to pay even for the English alliance; but without that alliance there was every probability that both places would be lost—Bombay to the Dutch, and Tangier to the Spaniards or the Moors. It was clearly the wisest policy to spend them while they were still in hand, and to spend them in the market where they would be most highly valued.

These then were the terms, together with the unprecedented marriage portion of 300,000*l.*, that the Ambassador had to offer Monk as the price of Charles's

[1] *Dictionary of National Biography, sub voce* 'Catherine of Braganza.'

hand if he were restored to the British throne. He was able to point out to the General—so the story goes—that 'besides the greatest portion in money that ever queen had, the Infanta was to bring with her Tangier, which would make the English masters of the trade in the Mediterranean, and Bombay, which would give them the like advantage in the East Indies; and over and above all would serve to humble the proud Spaniard, which the General, according to the notions he imbibed in his younger days, thought to be the greatest advantage of all.'[1] The story rings true. In his boyhood Monk had been brought up in the midst of the hot anti-Spanish feeling that surrounded Ralegh down in Devonshire. He had himself a score to wipe off, for his first taste of military service was at the miserable failure before Cadiz in 1625. There, it is worthy of note, he had served as a volunteer under his kinsman, Sir Richard Grenville, who was the moving spirit in the attack that was made on Lord Wimbledon for not attempting Gibraltar. The Ambassador's proposal must at least have awakened some vivid old memories. The whole scheme moreover exactly hit the soldierlike if crude ideas of statecraft which the great soldier of fortune had expressed in his 'Observations on Military and Political Affairs,' the work he had written during his imprisonment in the Tower. Indeed there is reason to believe that it was the brilliant prospect which this proposal opened up that finally stirred him from his neutrality. Immediately after the interview he sent his cavalier cousin, that arch-intriguer John Grenville, with whom he had long refused to speak a word on politics, to open communications with the King in Flanders.[2] On the General's advice Charles immediately made his escape from Spanish territory and sought refuge in Holland. At the Hague the Portuguese envoy met him, and subsequently followed him to

[1] Kennet's *Register*, pp. 91, 393, on the authority of Sir Robert Southwell, a few years later Ambassador to Portugal.

[2] Sir John Grenville, afterwards Earl of Bath, was the son of Monk's aunt, Grace, by her marriage with Sir Bevil Grenville, the elder brother of his father in-arms, Sir Richard.

London. What ensued is hidden, but Monk, it is said, took the first opportunity of recommending the proposal to Charles, and with so much weight that in the autumn the exultant envoy was able to return to Lisbon with assurances that set the whole of Portugal wild with delight.

At the last moment, to all appearance, the struggling kingdom was saved from a second destruction, but in fact it was still far from safe. When the Ambassador returned in February 1661 with full power to negotiate the marriage, he found hostility had made its mark. The far-reaching importance of the project in hand is testified by the vigour and variety of the opposition it aroused. It is clear that at first it received but little support except from Cromwell's men, Monk and Montague, now respectively Duke of Albemarle and Earl of Sandwich. Clarendon even is said not to have been converted at once to the Protector's policy, while to the end it was hotly opposed by the Queen-mother and the Earl of Bristol, the son of the first Earl, who as John Digby had tried so hard to get James I. to use the Mediterranean lever.

The opposition was natural enough. The Dutch, who were already well advanced in absorbing the Eastern possessions of Portugal, viewed the prospect of the English at Bombay as an intolerable check to their progress, while Spain, who had never recognised the new kingdom and still regarded Tangier as Spanish territory, openly announced that an English occupation of the place would be regarded as a *casus belli*. At the back of all was the resistance of the Roman Church. In spite of the pressure France had put upon the Pope he had stubbornly held by Spain, and refused to recognise the Braganza Government; the Inquisition was doing its best to crush the national movement; and in view of the frightening which the Vatican had recently received from Cromwell's cruising squadron, a Protestant porter at the gates of the Mediterranean could only be an abiding menace to Rome. So great was the danger which these influences seemed to threaten, that it is doubtful whether Cromwell's men—powerful and dreaded as they still were—would have

been able to hold Charles to their views, had not France come to the rescue. It was only with the greatest reluctance that she had abandoned her Portuguese friends at the treaty of the Pyrenees, and probably she had always meant to use the first opportunity of coming to their assistance underhanded. In Charles's dilemma Louis XIV. saw his opportunity. Mazarin was just dead, and almost the first move which the young King made on his own initiative in foreign politics was to assure Clarendon in the profoundest secrecy that if Charles took the contemplated step it would have the support of France. With this assurance the ground of the opposition, inspired as it was by the Queen-mother, was cut from under it. Till the last hour the momentous resolution was kept a close secret; but when finally the full Council was summoned to pronounce upon the Portuguese marriage, not a single vote was cast against it.

So, as it were, from its ashes the English Mediterranean policy sprang again into being, and once more it was the breath of France that gave it life. What more dramatic irony can history show? It was at this very moment that Colbert was preparing to found the only true navy that France had ever possessed. The day of its most glorious achievements was breaking, and the evil star that hung persistently over her heroic efforts to achieve the dominion of the sea glittered malignantly in the dawn. Once more we see England hanging back irresolutely from her destiny, and once more it is France who thrusts her on. We are on the threshold of a new era—European politics are pausing for a fresh departure—and this is the first step that France takes.

In the changing aspect of continental affairs it must have seemed natural enough. The era of the Thirty Years' War was at an end, and the age of Louis XIV. had begun. On the morrow of Charles's landing at Dover the young French King, by virtue of the treaty of the Pyrenees, had married the Infanta Maria Theresa, and the seeds of the great wars of succession were sown. Thenceforth France was to fill the place that Spain had filled, but as yet her advance must be halting. Her navy was still to create.

For the moment Louis's ambitions were set upon the Spanish Netherlands, and it was for the time inevitable that he should follow Mazarin's policy of using the English fleet. If England were strong in the Mediterranean, it was as yet a safeguard to France and her trade, and not a curb, and as things stood Louis's resolve was as statesmanlike as it was bold.

Whether the English Government fully grasped the meaning of the step is doubtful. Men like Monk and Sandwich, who had had to do with the navy in Cromwell's time and been in touch with Blake, may have felt, even if they could not formulate, the strategical importance of Tangier; but in the public declarations of ministers it is not clearly defined. When, on May 8, 1661, the King announced the marriage to an enthusiastic Parliament, Clarendon explained to them its meaning and intention; but he justified the match mainly on commercial grounds and as a defiance to Spain. He did not even mention Tangier or Bombay.[1] It is quite possible, however, that the intended occupation was to be kept a secret until it was an accomplished fact. In any case, what Clarendon revealed was enough, and both in Parliament and throughout the country the news was received with acclamation.

So the new Stuart monarchy boldly stepped out upon the road which the Republic had begun to tread, and it did so deliberately at the risk of almost certain war with Spain, a risk from which the King in his still unstable seat might well have flinched. Among the many causes which had led to the remarkable Royalist reaction was certainly the belief that a restoration would mean peace with Spain—the most valued field of English commerce. To reopen the war was to alienate the all-powerful merchant influence, which was looking forward to a period of quiet and prosperous business on the time-honoured lines. Though the promised support of France was enough to convince the King, it was not generally known, and the opposition in Parliament might have been serious had not the Spanish Ambassador himself come to the rescue by an excess of

[1] See the report of his speech in *Parliamentary History*, iv. 190; and Kennet's *Register*, p. 438.

zeal. A pamphlet had been issued pointing out that the commercial advantages which would flow from the Portuguese alliance would outweigh the loss of Spanish friendship. The Spanish Ambassador answered it by printing a counter-declaration which he had presented to the Council. His arguments were weighty enough, but he unwisely presented them in such a manner that he seemed to arrogate to his master the right to dictate to the King of England the choice of a wife.[1] The blunder was easily turned against him with the result that the innocent little Princess of Braganza became for the moment the heroine of British national sentiment, and Tangier the stronghold of the most violent feeling that can rouse Englishmen to adventurous action. So, when the Spanish Ambassador went so far, as was reported, as plainly to threaten war if the King persisted, Charles could safely reply, short and sharp, that 'the King of Spain might do what he pleased—he valued it not.'[2]

The action taken was prompt and determined. A powerful squadron for the Straits was already well forward under the old colour of a demonstration against Algiers. Since the withdrawal of Stoakes's squadron the corsairs had become troublesome again, and moreover a Dutch squadron with the same ostensible object was also about to sail for the southward and would require watching.[3]

'This month ends,' wrote Pepys on the last day of February 1661, 'with two great secrets under dispute, but yet known to very few: first, who the King will marry; and what the meaning of the fleet is that we are now sheathing to set out to the southward. Most think against Algiers, against the Turk, or to the East Indies against the Dutch.' A little later the excitement was increased by a second and still larger fleet being ordered. On June 10 Lord Sandwich, who was now joint Commander-in-Chief with Monk, informed Pepys that he had been appointed Ambassador Extraordinary to bring

[1] *Letters of Sir Richard Fanshaw*, p. 67.
[2] News-letter, March 12, *Trentham MSS.*, *Hist. MSS. Com.* v. 159.
[3] *Trentham MSS.*, *Hist. MSS. Com.* v. 166, 170, and see Sec. Nicholas to Curtius, May 10, 1661, *Dom. Cal.* 586.

home the Queen. First, however, he was to proceed to Algiers to settle the business with the Dey, and then, having seen his squadron revictualled and refreshed, to return to Lisbon with three ships, and there meet the fleet that was to follow him. Not a word was yet disclosed of seeing that England was not forestalled at Tangier, but already measures had been taken. It was known that Henry Mordaunt, now Earl of Peterborough, was to be rewarded for his heroic but hare-brained plotting against the Protectorate by the governorship of Tangier, and was to be given fifteen companies of foot from the garrison of Dunkirk.[1]

This appointment is the first intimation of another and most serious step that was necessary to round off the policy which Charles had adopted. Of all wise actions few perhaps have been more mercilessly misrepresented than the sale of Dunkirk. Justice in recent times has been done to the good motives of the Government, but the intimate connection of the surrender with the occupation of Tangier and the return to a strong Mediterranean policy has passed unnoticed. Yet it is certain that in the final stages of the marriage negotiations the two ideas were so intimately related as to form one strategical whole, and there is reason to believe that from the first they were regarded as inseparable.[2] Owing to the passions which the sale afterwards aroused the published accounts of the affair wear different colours, but all of them agree that Monk was from the first and throughout the firm advocate of the surrender, and that Sandwich was no less sure. Indeed Sandwich used to say that he was actually the first to propose it, on the ground that Dunkirk was wholly unsuited for a naval port.[3] All the known facts of the case go to confirm Clarendon's own account of the transaction. According to him it was arranged by Lord Southampton, the Lord Treasurer, who was at his

[1] *Trentham MSS.*, *Hist. MSS. Com.* v. 203.

[2] Kennet's *Register*, pp. 91, 770; Echard, *History*, Car. II. p. 84.

[3] Southwell to Clarendon (*Leybourne-Popham MSS.* p. 250). Pepys also says Sandwich declared, 'if it should in Parliament be inquired into the selling of Dunkirk, he will be found to be the greatest adviser of it.'

wit's end to make both ends meet, in consultation with Monk and 'the best seamen,' and its expediency was practically decided on before the question was ever brought before him. There seems indeed no doubt whatever that the whole of expert opinion regarded the project as highly desirable on strategical grounds. Clarendon however was shocked, and, when first approached by his colleagues, begged the matter might go no further till the King's opinion was taken. Whereupon Southampton persuaded Monk to come with him to Whitehall and broach the subject to the King and the Duke of York. After several discussions it was so far approved that Charles decided it should be brought before the secret committee of the Council. Besides the King and his brother and the Chancellor, it consisted of Southampton, Monk, Sandwich, Sir George Carteret, who had already won considerable reputation abroad as an admiral and was now Treasurer of the Navy, and the two secretaries—one being Monk's kinsman and right-hand man, Sir William Morice, who had originally arranged the first meeting with the Portuguese Ambassador. As Clarendon was ill they met at his house. The result of the conference was a unanimous opinion that on financial and strategical grounds Dunkirk ought to be given up.

The political reasons were no less strong. The Cromwellian policy to which they were recurring in the Portuguese marriage involved a close alliance with France, and with the almost certain prospect of war with Spain this was more than ever necessary. But so keen was Louis to secure Dunkirk that its retention would probably mean war with France as well as Spain, while its cession would almost certainly buy a French alliance of the closest description. Moreover, Charles was by no means satisfied with the mere secret assurance of support for his Portuguese policy that he had received from Louis, and this was only wise of him. For by a secret article in the treaty of the Pyrenees France had an engagement with Spain in precisely the opposite sense. Obviously, then, seeing the far-reaching nature of the policy on which England was about to embark, there was

everything to gain and very little to lose by giving up Dunkirk to France. It was getting rid of an incumbrance which had no place in the new world-wide scheme of empire, and acquiring something that for the time at least was an essential part of it. The decision of the secret committee therefore was to lay the matter before the Privy Council, where it was approved with but one dissentient voice.

Such then is the story as Clarendon tells it, and there seems no valid reason for doubting its general truth.[1] On the other hand there are many, as will be seen, for believing it. Though Clarendon himself gives no dates at which the prolonged deliberations about Dunkirk, so circumstantially related, took place, it is certain they must have practically accompanied the marriage negotiations. The match was finally announced to Parliament on May 8. Sandwich, who was present at all the meetings about Dunkirk, left London to join the fleet on June 10, and did not return to town till the end of the following year. The meetings must therefore have begun at latest immediately after the question of the King's marriage was settled. There is further the fact that the marriage treaty actually contained a clause by which Charles bound himself not to surrender Dunkirk to Spain. It is difficult to believe that such a proviso could have been admitted had not the King already decided, in principle at least, to give up Cromwell's conquest and to give it up to France. It is certain at any rate that Charles lost no time in

[1] The only serious contradiction comes from Clarendon's own lips. When the Comte d'Estrades came over from France as Ambassador Extraordinary to arrange the marriage of Charles's sister with the Duc d'Orléans, he had secret instructions to negotiate the sale. At the outset he was staggered by the high price Clarendon asked. Clarendon told him that as yet he had only gained over the King and the Duke of York. He had yet to convince Monk, Sandwich, and the Treasurer, and it was only by Louis's promising a high price he could hope to do so. Clarendon clearly gave Estrades to understand that the sale was his own idea, and that the other three men were not yet in the secret. A week later he told the Ambassador, to Louis's regret, that they had been informed of what was going on. Clearly, however, Clarendon, in holding his three powerful colleagues in the background, was only using an ordinary device to drive a hard bargain. (*Lettres et Mémoires d'Estrades*, August 17, 21, 27, 1662. Combe's *Sale of Dunkirk*, pp. 7, 11, 13, &c.)

broaching the subject. In July the Comte d'Estrades came over to settle the marriage of the King's sister with the Duc d'Orléans. Before even he had made his public entry Charles sent for him for a confidential interview. After speaking of the special subject of his mission Charles casually mentioned Dunkirk and began to talk big about its being a *place d'armes* from which he could step to further conquest. The Ambassador, however, would not rise to the cast. He put the matter off by saying his master attached little importance to the place strategically, and then proceeded to encourage the King in the dreams of distant empire to which the possession of Jamaica and the Portuguese alliance seemed to open the way.[1]

There can then be practically no doubt that here in Charles's feint and the Ambassador's *riposte* we have the real meaning of the sale of Dunkirk. It was a vital factor in the return to the same policy which the Protector had adopted when he found his dream of a Protestant crusade impracticable, and which he abandoned when his crusading hopes revived. As the zealot in him had sacrificed Gibraltar for Dunkirk, so now Monk's level head forced the surrender of Dunkirk for Tangier, and swung the country definitely into the course that was to lead it to empire. There was but one serious man who is known to have doubted the wisdom of the exchange, and that was Schomberg. The famous soldier was passing through London on his way to take command of the Portuguese army, and he seized the moment to press Charles to keep Dunkirk. But he did not deal with the seamen's objections or the financiers'. His reasons were purely military and his aim religious. The place, he contended, was a point of entry always tenable by a power that had command of the sea. The value he attached to such a point of entry is perfectly clear. He was a Calvinist, and his advice to hold Dunkirk was accompanied by an earnest appeal to the King to put himself at the head of a Protestant league. Thus his

[1] *Lettres et Mémoires d'Estrades.* Estrades to Louis, July 11–21, 1661.

advocacy only confirms the wisdom of the other great soldier whose opinion was against him. It was but fresh testimony that Dunkirk was valueless except in view of the visionary policy of a Protestant crusade. The Elector of Brandenburg, when the sale was known, rightly read it as an abandonment of that policy. He too bewailed it, but only on political grounds. It would, he said, have served as a bridle both to France and Spain. In answer to his reproaches he was assured that it was to make the curb more severe that the step had been taken. England's immediate object was to strengthen her naval position, and from that point of view Dunkirk was a hindrance and not a help. It required a costly garrison, and as a naval station it was useless. Its surrender was an economy of strength and money, and the price was to be spent mainly upon the navy or laid up as a war fund.[1]

This was certainly the idea and intention of Monk and the seamen. Probably Charles meant it too. His head at this time was full of imperial aspirations, to which his marriage seemed to open the way. 'I remember,' says Bishop Burnet, writing of Tangier, 'when I knew the Court first, it was talked of at a mighty rate as the foundation of a new empire, and he would have been a very hardy man that would have ventured to have spoke lightly of it.'[2] The King's instructions to the men he sent out to take possession of his new acquisition fully

[1] Ranke, iii. 391, cf. Burnet, 173. Burnet's account goes far to confirm Clarendon, though he differs in details. 'The military men,' he says, 'who were believed to be corrupted by France, said the place was not tenable &c. The Earl of Clarendon said he understood not these matters, but appealed to Monk's judgment, who did positively advise the letting it go for the sum that France offered. To make the business go the easier the King promised he would lay up all the money in the Tower and that it should not be touched but upon extraordinary occasions.' This reads almost like an echo of Monk's idea expressed in cap. xxix. of his *Observations*, 'showing how necessary it is for England . . . providently to prepare a rich public treasure beforehand, either for the defence of themselves or offending their enemies.' For a curious story that Monk 'agreed to and pressed the selling of Dunkirk because Sir Edward Harley, the Governor, was timid,' see Robert Harley to Sir Edward Harley, *Welbeck MSS.* iii. 616, March 14, 1700.

[2] Foxcroft, *Supplement to Burnet's History*, p. 30. Burnet first came to London in 1662; he was not actually about the Court till ten years later. *Ibid.* p. 463.

bear out Burnet's remark, and show that Charles did not think of stopping short at Tangier or Bombay. They disclose, as the Bishop says, dreams of a gradually expanding empire in North Africa and another in the Far East, together with the domination of the Mediterranean, and the hope of absorbing the whole trade of Brazil. 'You know,' wrote Charles to Sir Richard Fanshaw on the eve of his departure as Ambassador to Portugal, 'You know one of the principal advantages we propose to ourself by this entire conjunction with Portugal is the advancement of the trade of this nation and the enlargement of our own territories and dominions.' Fanshaw himself was wholly with his preceptor and his imagination ranged higher still. He saw in a rosy future the male line of the House of Braganza fail, and England, even if Portugal itself slipped from her, succeeding by right and might to the vast trade and empire that centred at Lisbon.[1] Well might the Brandenburg Ambassador assure his master that the real reason of the step which the English were taking was to be found in the traditional belief—mistake he calls it—that Great Britain was a separate world. In truth England was embarked upon a world-wide policy, and in truth it was an idea that had been growing ever since the days when the Elizabethans taught her to know herself. But the German did not see how the idea had been modified by the work of Cromwell and Blake. He did not see how they had found in the Mediterranean a firmer grip on the vitals of Europe than any North Sea port could give.

It is then with this great departure, and not with the humiliation that immediately followed it, that we should associate the sale of Dunkirk. It should be remembered for what it meant at the time—and what it came at last to be—the final departure of England upon her true career. We should honour the King for his great intention and the men who brought him to it: Southampton, who

[1] Charles II. to Fanshaw, August 23, 1661, *Heathcote MSS.* (*Hist. MSS. Com.*) p. 18. Fanshaw's instructions, *ibid.* p. 20. Fanshaw to Clarendon, *ibid.* p. 37. Peterborough's commission for Tangier, September 6, 1661, Davis, *History of the Second Queen's Royal Regiment*, p. 15.

justly measured the resources at his disposal; Sandwich, the admiral, who had learned the value of the Mediterranean; and above all Monk, the strategist and statesman, without whom in those early days the King would not move a finger, and at whose nod he felt that at any moment he might have to start on his travels again. It was these three men who, with Clarendon the Chancellor, were appointed the secret commissioners to carry out the sale—a fact which leaves no room for doubt that they were the real moving spirits in the affair.[1]

If we look closely at the men themselves, there remains as little doubt of the purity and loftiness of their intention. In their several persons they typified all the leading forces and ideas of which Charles's imperial policy was the latest expression. Southampton was the son of the man who was Shakespeare's patron and Essex's second self, and the sharer of all his ventures against Spain. One of the most ardent vessels of the Elizabethan spirit, he had become under James the promoter of every colonial enterprise and the embodiment of the national feeling which regarded Spain implacably as the hereditary enemy, and her colonial empire as the promised land. The alarm caused in Madrid when, in 1617, his name was connected with the first proposed expedition of an English fleet into the Mediterranean will be remembered.[2] Thomas Wriothesley, the fourth Earl, though bred under these hot passions till the age of fourteen, was of a more stable temperament. A pattern of sober thought and lofty integrity, a convinced constitutionalist yet loyal subject, he had won the confidence of all parties. His appointment as Lord Treasurer at the Restoration was as quieting as that of Monk as Captain-General, and from the first the purity of his administration shone like the survival of a golden age. Of Sandwich it is enough to say he was the pupil of Blake and may be taken as representing the great admiral's ideas of the higher naval strategy, and

[1] Kennet's *Register*. They were appointed on September 1, 1662, while the negotiations were still a profound secret. The matter was not settled till three months later. *Ranke*, iii. 390.

[2] *Supra*, p. 47.

those of the leading men of his school. But it is Monk whose life most curiously covers the period of development and accentuates its most prominent points. Born and bred in the very womb of Elizabethan romance, he had fed on the new spirit with his mother's milk. He was related to all the greatest names of that age from Grenville to Howard. Their exploits were his nursery tales. His uncles had fought and died under Drake and Vere, and at the house of his Aunt Stukeley hard by the place where he was educated, he must have had the son of Pocahontas for a playfellow and worshipped Ralegh in the flesh as his boyish hero. A childhood so coloured was never quite outgrown. When scarcely out of boyhood he had served throughout Buckingham's ill-starred attempts to revive the glories of the past age. Then, like his fathers, he had gone to serve the Dutch against their oppressors, and after ten years' distinguished service he returned to England with the reputation of the pattern Low Country soldier. It was the eve of the troubles, but as yet all was quiet. The old spirit was still strong within him and Monk could not rest. Pining for adventure, he joined the wild scheme by which a thousand gentlemen, under the leadership of Prince Rupert and with a million of capital, were to sail away to conquer Madagascar, and from there to carve out, like Alexander, a mighty empire in the East. The civil wars put an end to all such dreams. But when they were over and Monk had risen to be Cromwell's right hand, it was intended that he should lead the career of conquest in the West Indies; and could he have been spared from Scotland he might well, as the greatest military administrator and one of the finest strategists of his time, have written a very different page on the Commonwealth history. As it was, he remained to build up a fresh reputation as an admiral against the Dutch, to command single-handed the most powerful fleet that had ever sailed the sea, and to lead it to victory against the greatest of the Dutch seamen. In his new sphere he lived to complete Blake's work and perfect the soldier's influence on the naval art. By him it was raised to the position of a

true science, and posterity has recognised him as the real father of modern naval tactics.

When, therefore, we see such men as these proposing and carrying through the Portuguese alliance and the surrender of Dunkirk, as it were in one movement, it is clear that, as was always asserted at the time, the two transactions were parts of one great design. It is clear too that that design was the expression of all that was most vigorous and sagacious in the expanding sentiment of the nation, the product of the forces and feeling that had been forming it for a century past, and the finger-post of the characteristic British policy whose most notable and enduring features are expansion beyond the Oceans and domination of the Mediterranean Sea. It was Cromwell who sounded the note and Cromwell who gave the means for carrying it to action—Cromwell who, as his best historian has said, was the greatest because the most typical of Englishmen of all time. So it was the greatest and most typical of Englishmen who carried the idea into being—men who represented the central stream of British opinion—for, of the four, two were the most sober of the Stuart councillors, and two the most moderate of Cromwell's men-at-arms.

The failure of the policy to secure the immediate and wide results that were very pardonably expected from it soon came to obscure its true intention, and, instead of being regarded as a loyal effort to take up the bow of Cromwell, it has survived as the emblem of the Stuart fatuity. But we have only to follow the history of the Tangier episode to see how unjustly posterity has judged it. We have only to see how profound was the impression in Europe, how nearly success was achieved, and how stoutly Charles clung to his original idea while one after the other all his fondest illusions were shattered, to appraise the matter at its true value.

CHAPTER XX

THE FIRST OCCUPATION OF THE STRAITS

For the student of history there is no more dangerous pitfall than the temptation to attach too much reality to the periods which historians shape for the elucidation of their work. It is so easy to fall into the error of thinking that, because those periods are clearly defined to us, they were also apprehended by the men of the time. Yet there have been pauses in the great march of events which were always unmistakable, and such a one is that which is marked by the treaty of the Pyrenees. Followed as it was by Louis's assumption of power, by Charles's restoration, and the Portuguese marriage, it was obviously a fresh point of departure. Europe was plainly marshalled in a new order, and every one was watching for the first indication of its outcome.

Since the signature of the treaty in 1659 until the middle of the year 1661 the statesmen of Western Europe had been occupied exclusively with the setting of the board. It was the sailing of Sandwich's fleet that was the first move, and as on June 19 he weighed for the Mediterranean every eye was upon him. It is true his ostensible mission was nothing more serious than to bring Algiers to reason, and doubtless the alleged object was more than a mere pretence. The security which Cromwell had given to the Levant trade had done much to reconcile the powerful merchant interest to his government, and Charles could not afford to do less. But no one believed there was not much beyond. Estrades assured his master that the design on Algiers was a mere blind to cover an attempt to intercept the Spanish Plate fleet which Sandwich was to make in concert with a

Portuguese squadron. 'It will certainly happen,' he added, 'if things do not change.' [1]

Indeed it seemed that the step that England was about to take was of so high an import that it must inevitably precipitate a war between the chief maritime powers. The Spanish Ambassador in London, as we know, was openly threatening hostilities if Charles persisted in his design to occupy Tangier. In Holland the sky was scarcely less stormy. The Dutch were still in a state of war with Portugal over affairs in the Far East and in Brazil, and the English marriage treaty naturally left it uncertain as to how far Charles intended to make the Portuguese cause his own. Like him therefore they determined to fit out a squadron to act against the corsairs in the Mediterranean, and De Ruyter was given the command. Against the Barbary states they had grievances enough, but it is clear they were not De Ruyter's first object any more than they were Sandwich's. A fleet of East Indiamen was due to arrive in the Texel. In view of the stormy relations with England, it was coming home North-about round Scotland, and instead of proceeding to the Straits De Ruyter was ordered to the Doggerbank to cover its home-coming. This duty accomplished he returned to the Texel, where he was met with the news that Sandwich had sailed to the southward, and that with the utmost speed he was to prepare his fleet to follow him. His corsair story, as usual, was nowhere believed. Every one smelt a fresh attack on Portugal in the wind.[2] Nor were they far wrong. The idea in the mind of the States was that De Ruyter should endeavour, in concert with the Spaniards, to prevent Sandwich molesting the Plate fleet. To this end a second squadron under Cornelis Evertzen was being brought forward to reinforce him, and on July 19, just a month after Sandwich had sailed, De Ruyter stood down Channel after him, bound for Cadiz, but fully expecting to have to fight his way into the port through an Anglo-Portuguese fleet.[3] To this delicate situation must be added the fact that the Dutch had just

[1] *Lettres d'Estrades*, 144, July 25, 1661. [2] *Hist. MSS. Com.* v. 159.
[3] G. Brandt, *La Vie de Michel de Ruiter*, Amsterdam, folio, 1698, p. 159.

concluded a successful war in the Baltic. They were indeed fast recovering from the blows which Cromwell had dealt them, and it was a moment when they were little likely to sit down quietly under the new bid that England was making for maritime supremacy in the Levant and the Far East. Nothing therefore looked more probable than a great naval war, in which England and Portugal would be arrayed against Spain and Holland. Such a catastrophe was all that France could desire, and, judging by the line which Louis was soon to take, it is even possible that the prospect had no little to do with the encouragement he had given to the English King.

Thus, as the Earl of Sandwich's fleet swept southward, it could only appear as the opening move of a naval drama, of which no one could foresee the end. He was first in the field, and, finding that as yet all was quiet, he held on straight for Algiers. The weather, however, proved so adverse that he could not make the place, and as he was ill it was decided to run for Alicante. It was only a bout of fever, and so soon as the admiral was better they sailed again and appeared before Algiers at the end of July. The Dey proved obdurate, and as a bombardment failed to bring him to reason it was decided to make a formal attack on the mole. For a week, however, the weather kept obstinately foul, and by the end of that time, as in Mansell's case, the Algerines succeeded in making a formidable boom which seriously changed the prospects of the contemplated operation. In the existing state of affairs it was impossible to submit the fleet to any great risk, and in council of war it was decided to abandon the attempt. Sandwich, moreover, was now due at Lisbon to take up his mission as Envoy Extraordinary to settle the final details of the marriage. He therefore ordered Lawson, his vice-admiral, with ten sail to maintain the blockade and bring the Dey to reason by the destruction of his marine at sea, while he himself with five sail, in accordance with his original instructions, held away for the Tagus.[1] About the Straits he encountered De Ruyter

[1] See letters to Pepys, Sept. 10–11, published in *Hodgkin MSS.* (*Hist. MSS. Com.* xv. ii.), pp. 158–9, and Sandwich's 'Diary' in Kennet's *Register*.

and politely returned his salute, though without lowering his flag. He even gave him a full account of his failure at Algiers, and then passed on his way. By this time De Ruyter had received the whole of his reinforcements, but far from proceeding against the corsairs he was cleaning his ships in batches at Cadiz, ready for his real orders when they reached him. Scarcely had Sandwich left him when he received despatches that informed him of the mystery of his mission. With the utmost secrecy he was to open communications with the Duke of Medina-Celi, Governor of Andalusia, and to concert with him measures for defending the Plate fleet against Sandwich and the Portuguese. Thereupon he promptly followed in the British admiral's wake and put into Cadiz.[1]

Some such move was of course expected by Sandwich, but at present he had no instructions to bring pressure upon Spain. As yet she had given no sign of movement to resist the British occupation of the Straits. On the contrary, her Ambassador in London had been told to moderate his tone. Still that in no way relaxed Charles's warlike preparations. The second fleet, with a formidable military force, was being organised under the Earl of Peterborough. It could only be intended for Tangier, and there was little doubt that the quietness of Spain covered some deeper design to forestall him. Moreover, relations with Holland over the Portuguese question had become more strained than ever, owing to the presence of De Ruyter at the storm centre and to Charles's opposing their claim to trade with his new ally on an equal footing with the English.[2] The cloud that hung over Western Europe was daily growing darker, and at the end of August Sir Richard Fanshaw was appointed Envoy Extraordinary to Lisbon in order to relieve Sandwich and free his hand for action, while in the following week Peterborough's commission to command the Tangier expedition was signed. The military force was to consist of four foot regiments numbering three thousand men and a troop of a hundred horse. Part were to be newly

[1] *Vie de De Ruiter*, p. 261.
[2] Fanshaw's instructions, *Heathcote MSS.* p. 19.

raised and part made up from the Dunkirk garrison, and the whole was to be accompanied by a powerful naval escort.[1] Such a force took no little time to prepare. Thus, long before Peterborough could get away, De Ruyter's fleet, by still further reinforcements, had been brought up to its full strength of over twenty sail, besides vessels up the Straits on convoy service, and the situation had become in the highest degree critical. The English Government was fully sensible of the difficulties before them, and with a man like Monk as war minister they were well prepared to meet them. A peculiar danger was, as they had reason to fear, that in spite of the marriage treaty Peterborough might not be admitted to Tangier. A clause in his instructions specially contemplates such an eventuality. In case he found it so he was to return home, if—and this is the significant condition—'if upon joint advice with Lord Sandwich you shall not agree upon some further design for our service.' He had also, be it noted, express power to occupy any place that might be in a state of hostility to the British realm. Clearly, if Spain interfered, Spain was to suffer. She was especially anxious—and not without cause—not only about the Plate fleet but also about Gibraltar. Before she knew she could rely on a Dutch squadron, a message had been sent out to the Indies to divert the flota away from Cadiz and order it to Coruña instead, while at the cost of dislocating the military operations against Portugal large reinforcements were thrown into the Rock.

As yet, however, nothing was done openly on either side. Lawson was still operating before Algiers, blockading the port and playing havoc on its shipping with his cruisers. All September De Ruyter, in accordance with his secret orders, lay about Cape St. Vincent to cover the Plate fleet, while Sandwich remained in the Tagus doing honour to the new Queen of England and gracing the

[1] For Peterborough's commission and details of the troops, see Colonel Davis, *History of the Second Queen's Royal Regiment*, a work in which the author has printed or abstracted practically all the really important documents relating to the English occupation of Tangier from a military point of view.

marriage rejoicings. In the first days of October, however, an alarm reached him that a combined Dutch and Spanish fleet was off Tangier. He had by this time ten sail under his orders, and in the midst of the festivities he suddenly put to sea and sent forward a despatch vessel to Algiers to summon Lawson to his aid. A week later he was before Tangier, but not a sign of an enemy was to be seen, and in five days Lawson appeared. Tangier was still safe, but the situation was as strained as ever. De Ruyter had moved down to the Straits. Lawson, on his way from Algiers, had actually spoken with him off Malaga. The Dutch admiral informed him that he was there to make war on the corsairs. As a matter of fact, although De Ruyter had no intention of leaving the Straits till further orders, he was for the moment devoting his attention to the pirates. By the end of September he had been informed that the Plate fleet was safe in Coruña, and he had at once taken steps to employ his squadron in the business upon which it had ostensibly come out. Lawson was engaged in the same quest, and with rough ingenuity begged De Ruyter to communicate his private signal that they might co-operate more easily. De Ruyter, too old a hand to be drawn by so barefaced a confidence trick, refused, and with this information Lawson had joined Sandwich at Tangier.[1]

Clearly in the eyes of the two British admirals De Ruyter was not to be trusted, and all October and November they lay where they were, watching, with a division continually out in the 'Gut' of the Straits. Their force was none too strong nor their stores too plentiful, and as the weeks passed by without any news of Peterborough having sailed, Sandwich began to grow anxious. It was not till December 9 that the Dunkirk regiments were embarked, and this week the situation at Tangier grew in excitement. Sandwich's cruisers had got touch with a Dutch fleet in the Straits. One of his captains came in to report that Sir John Lawson had been seen 'flying to windward amongst several of the Dutch fleet,' and that he had sighted seven of their men-of-war coming out of the

[1] *Vie de De Ruiter*, p. 163.

Straits close aboard the Spanish coast, as though making for Cadiz.[1] The tension now grew extreme. A combined Dutch and Spanish squadron might appear at any moment to force an action before Peterborough could join. De Ruyter's ships were continually being seen hovering about, and Sandwich and Lawson, with the fleet in two divisions, took up positions on either side of the Straits in keen expectation of a fight. There they watched day after day, shadowing the Dutch ships and ready for immediate action, till at last it was known that De Ruyter, with the bulk of his squadron, had retired to Port Mahon in Minorca to careen.[2] The crisis passed, Lawson was despatched back to Algiers, and Sandwich remained on guard alone.

No sooner, however, was one danger over than another arose in its place. Just as the home Government had anticipated, the Moors were pressing round Tangier in a way that began to look ugly, and presently Sandwich received word from the 'Emperor of Fez' that the Spaniards were urging him to prevent the English getting hold of Tangier.[3] Similar information came in from other quarters. The admiral, according to a correspondent, was continually getting intelligence of the great endeavours in all parts of the world to prevent his Majesty possessing so considerable a place.[4] So serious indeed did the Moorish attitude grow that the Portuguese Governor, who was sullenly opposed to giving up the place to any one, was compelled to apply to Sandwich for a promise of assistance if his position became really dangerous. There was a growing suspicion that a secret understanding with the Moors was the real means by which Spain in her helplessness hoped to prevent the surrender of Tangier. But if it was really on Moorish activity she relied for her end, her hand was ill-played, and it suddenly turned the game against her. On January 12, 1662, the Portuguese Governor, galled by the

[1] Davis, 26.
[2] Sandwich's 'Journal' in Kennet's *Register*; *Vie de De Ruiter*, p. 164.
[3] Estrades to Louis, February 6, 1662 (*Lettres et Mémoires d'Estrades*).
[4] Luke's Letter, February 17, 1662 (*S.P. Colonial, Tangiers*).

increasing pressure about him, sallied out for a foray. On his way he fell into an ambush and was killed. The result naturally was to embolden the hovering enemy still further, and a panic seized the garrison. In despair they sent to beg the British admiral for help. Sandwich was no man to let such an opportunity slip. Without a moment's hesitation he landed a large force of seamen under Sir John Stayner, his rear-admiral, and from that moment was practically in possession of the coveted port. At the same time Peterborough, with a fleet of nineteen sail, besides transports, was sailing at last from the Downs, and before January was out he had anchored in Tangier Bay.

Thus England had won the first point in the great game that was developing, and so far from Charles's policy having destroyed his prestige, the strength and decision he had displayed pointed quite the other way. No other power could show a success to put beside the hold which Charles had fixed upon the gates of the Mediterranean, nor had one of them seen its way to lifting a finger against him. Holland had threatened with De Ruyter's fleet, and it had accomplished nothing. The impotence of Spain was proclaimed aloud as her treasure fleet slunk home to a remote and inaccessible port. France had cut a scarcely more imposing figure. Through the greater part of the year 1661 a fleet had been in preparation in Brest and Rochelle under M. de Nieuchèse and Du Quesne. It was destined for the Mediterranean, but not till the opening of 1662 was it able to assemble; and when at last it sailed in February it was only to be shattered by a storm and driven back to Rochelle. The intention had been that it should be joined in the Mediterranean by a squadron from Toulon; but there things were even more behindhand; and when the English flag was raised over Tangier castle, Charles was undisputed master of the seas.[1]

The contrast between the maritime position which England had won and that of France quickly brought

[1] Jal, *Du Quesne*, i. 246 *et seq.*

home to Louis the mistake he had made, and before the English had been in Tangier a month he began to repent the countenance he had given to the move. As has been said, he probably had no idea the thing would be accomplished so easily. He had rather hoped to see the great maritime nations engaged in a mutually destructive struggle which would give breathing time for his own navy to grow up. Instead of this he found his naval position alarmingly weakened, and was face to face with the galling fact that the most formidable of the sea powers was securely established at the most important strategical point in the world.

To appreciate his nervousness we must remember that it was only two years since Charles Gustavus had attempted to secure the domination of the Baltic by seizing both sides of the Sound, and so alarming was the prospect that all the sea powers had combined to frustrate his intention. It was on this business that Sandwich had been occupied when he was summoned back to England with his fleet by the events which immediately preceded the Restoration. Now it happened that while the French Atlantic and Mediterranean squadrons lay helpless in port the young King was informed that Sandwich's captains, operating from Tangier, were surveying and taking soundings in places, which aroused his gravest suspicions. He was convinced that the English meant to establish themselves in the Straits in such a way that they would be able to make of it another Sound, and exact a toll from every ship that passed. With Colbert already at his elbow his hopes of power were based on the expansion of French commerce. Here at the outset was the prospect of an intolerable check, and he wrote to his Ambassador in England[1] to impart his fears and bid him find out what

[1] *Lettres et Mémoires d'Estrades*, Feb. 26, 1662. Louis's words are curious. He speaks of a suspected project of the English to take the 'Albousiennes Islands.' By this he can only mean either 'Alboran Island,' which lies midway between Capes Gata and Tres Furcas, or what is now called 'Albucemas Island,' on the Riff coast about a hundred miles within the Straits. In eighteenth century charts it is marked as 'Albouzemez.' It is difficult to see how the occupation of either place could have increased the strength of the English position. The inference is either that Louis

was intended. The results of the Ambassador's inquiries appear to have done little to quiet his master's apprehensions. Whatever else Sandwich and his captains were doing they had certainly already taken soundings to determine the position of a great mole which Peterborough was authorised to commence at Tangier, and experts and skilled masons were being sought for in Genoa and Leghorn, where the two most recent harbours had been constructed.

The energy and directness which the English Government were displaying in the matter are startling to us who know to how low a level Charles's administration was to sink. To the men of that day it must have seemed that England was destined to rise only higher and higher from the point to which Cromwell had raised her, and Charles's dream of empire must have begun to look very like reality. 'Our main design'—so Peterborough's instructions ran—'in putting ourself to this great charge for making this addition to our dominions being to gain our subjects the trade of Barbary and to enlarge our dominions in that sea, and advance thereby the honour of our crown and the general commerce and wealth of our subjects.'[1] So the pleasure-loving King, whom posterity has come to regard as a mere feather-headed libertine, announced a true Mediterranean policy. It was the first official declaration that England must become a Mediterranean power, a distinct and bold advance upon the idea of mere commerce protection that had preceded it. Nor must it be imagined that it was not in reality the voice of Charles that spoke. At this time his interest and earnestness in public affairs, and especially in all matters connected with the navy and imperial expansion, were real and active. With a united nation at his back, as it seemed, and surrounded by the best of Cromwell's men and his own, it was natural for him to believe that the power behind him

mistook the character or position of the islands, or else that he had reason to believe that Tangier would not be given up to the English, and was afraid that, in spite of the schemes that were on foot to prevent them, they were determined to establish themselves somewhere or other in the mouth of the Mediterranean—if not at Tangier, then at Albucemas or Alboran.

[1] *S.P. Colonial, Tangier*, i. No. 3.

was irresistible and fully equal to the achievement of his high ambition.

Everything seemed to give way before the prestige he had acquired. Lawson had done his work so thoroughly that in April he exacted a treaty from Algiers, and later in the year concluded similar arrangements with Tunis and Tripoli.[1] The French fleet, on the other hand, only further covered itself with contempt, and fell a prey to the evils which Mazarin had tried so hard to uproot. It will be remembered that in 1650, when things were going hard with him, he had found it necessary for the Queen-mother to resign the Grand Mastership of the Navy in order that it might be used to conciliate the powerful Duc de Vendôme, the King's uncle. Not only was it vested in him, but it was entailed on his issue; and now his son, the young Duc de Beaufort, had joined the fleet to serve his apprenticeship to the high office for which he was destined. With such a volunteer on board the admirals naturally soon found they were no longer in real command, and discipline went by the board. It was not till March that they managed between them to get through the Straits and commence operations. Still Beaufort and the admirals did nothing but quarrel. The junior officers followed suit; and though Louis had declared war magnificently on all the Barbary states, the fleet did nothing but make an ineffective cruise along the African coast, and then ignominiously put into Toulon empty-handed.[2] The situation was all the more annoying because Louis was bent on establishing a foothold in Africa similar to that which Charles had secured at Tangier, and the engineer he had sent out to select a spot had just returned with a report in favour of Stora, the modern Philippeville, between Tunis and Algiers. But such was the disorganisation at Toulon that there seemed little hope of getting an expedition started. The jealousy and suspicion which the French authorities displayed towards the English marks clearly the prevalent feeling. In

[1] Kennet's *Register*, p. 697; Fanshaw to Sec. Morice, Dec. 11–21, 1662, *Heathcote MSS.* 51; Pepys' *Diary*, Nov. 30.

[2] Jal, *Du Quesne*, 257 *et seq.*, and 184, *n.*

March Lawson had been refused victual at Toulon. In July three other English vessels put in to refit, and Du Quesne was sure it was but an excuse to see what preparations were being made there. Possibly it was so; for De Ruyter, who still lay at the Balearic islands awaiting orders, had detached two ships thither, and it is possible the English were shadowing them. At any rate, Du Quesne reported, with one of his spiteful snarls at his superiors, that he was taking the greatest care that the Englishmen saw nothing in the state of affairs which might arouse their contempt for the French navy. 'If that should happen,' he wrote, 'nothing could console me.'[1]

It is, however, in another project which at this time began to occupy the French King's mind that we seem to see the most noteworthy effect of the English success. For some time past a provincial official called Ricquet had been making preliminary surveys to determine the possibility of connecting the Atlantic with the Mediterranean by a canal through Languedoc. Whether it was by the instructions of the Government is not clear, but in November 1662 he laid his scheme before Colbert, pointing out that if the project were put into effect the Straits of Gibraltar would cease to be a *passage nécessaire* for France, and that the bulk of the trade, which found an emporium in Cadiz, would be diverted to French ports. Heroic as was this remedy for the defects of the French position, it was immediately taken up in all seriousness. Detailed surveys were ordered; by the spring of 1663 they were complete; and a commission was appointed to report on the execution of the gigantic work.[2]

Meanwhile the English were equally busy strengthening their hold on the Straits. It became clearer every day that they were not to be permitted to enjoy calmly the vantage point they had gained. The Spaniards and Dutch were negotiating for a joint fleet against Algiers—in itself a suspicious indication. In Cadiz the Duke of

[1] *Hodgkin MSS.* 162; Jal, *Du Quesne*, 275.
[2] *Histoire de Ricquet*, p. 304 &c.; *Lettres de Colbert*, vol. iv. *passim*.

Albuquerque was preparing a powerful armada. Fanshaw had reason to believe the Spanish Government was in communication not only with the Dutch but also with Guylan, the 'Emperor of Fez,' who by this time had made himself master of the whole of Morocco, with the exception of Salee, Tetuan, and the Spanish port of Ceuta. He had appeared in the neighbourhood of Tangier with a formidable army. Hostilities were constantly occurring between his men and the British garrison, till it was thought well to make a serious sally. On May 3 it was attempted; the Moors were driven headlong from their advanced positions; but so hotly did the English troops pursue their advantage that they eventually found themselves surrounded, and were beaten back with heavy loss. For the time, however, Guylan had had enough, and, moving off against Tetuan, began to make overtures for peace. Still he was not to be trusted. Fanshaw believed that the intention of the Spanish Government was that Albuquerque should blockade Tangier, while Guylan suddenly returned to attack it from the land side. He convinced himself that this was the meaning of Guylan's recent appearance before the place, and that it was only the opportune arrival of Lawson from a cruise up the Straits that had frustrated the design.[1] Under the circumstances it was determined to replace Peterborough by a more experienced officer. A man of the right stamp was at hand in Lord Rutherford, the late Governor of Dunkirk. A Scottish soldier of fortune, who had risen with high distinction to the rank of Lieutenant-General in the French service, he represented the last word of the Low Country school of military science; and with the surrender of Dunkirk he was free for employment. A fat pension induced Peterborough to resign, while an earldom persuaded Rutherford to take his place. In the spring of 1663 all was ready to make the occupation of Tangier a reality.

[1] Fanshaw to Clarendon, October 21, 1662 (*Heathcote MSS.* p. 37; cf. Duro, *Armada Española*, v. cap. iv. and App. p. 446). Albuquerque's fleet, according at least to his official orders, was intended to cover the arrival of the Plate fleet, and then to operate against Portugal.

Lawson had come home in the winter to replace his spent ships, and was ready with a fresh fleet to take out the new Governor with reinforcements and everything that was necessary for establishing a naval station. In spite of his growing financial embarrassments Charles had decided to set aside 30,000*l.* a year for constructing a harbour, and a contract to that effect had been signed. The contractors were Rutherford, now Earl of Teviot, Lawson the admiral, and Sir Hugh Cholmley, an engineer who had recently completed a pier at Whitby.

They were welcomed at their destination by the news that Schomberg, at the head of his Anglo-Portuguese army, had inflicted a crushing defeat at the frontier upon Don John of Austria, the Spanish General. The victory greatly relieved the situation by crippling the power of Spanish interference at Tangier. Teviot, moreover, at a first view, expressed himself as highly contented with the place,[1] and got to work at once upon the fortifications. Two advanced forts were commenced, and the whole line of outworks strengthened with calthrops, mines, retrenchments, and every device which the latest military science could suggest. Scarcely were the additions complete when Guylan, who had received the submission of Tetuan, appeared in force, and made a determined attack upon the new works. As the assault was delivered between twelve and one, when the men were dining, it was to some extent a surprise; but, thanks to Teviot's scientific preparation, and the energy with which the troops showered hand-grenades upon the Moors, they were driven back with heavy loss. So soon as the Moors had retired, Teviot, being a man of grim humour, sent Guylan a letter complaining of the way he had chosen to pay his visit of welcome. He objected to being disturbed at his meals, and reminded the Moor that it was not customary or polite to pay calls at dinner time. Guylan appears to have been very favourably impressed. He replied in the same spirit, and a correspondence ensued which resulted in a truce for six months.[2]

[1] Fanshaw to Sec. Bennet, June 7, 1663, *Heathcote MSS.* p. 110.
[2] Davis, 43 *et seq.*

The cessation secured, Teviot, after seeing the works on the mole fairly started, went home to report to the King and obtain the men and stores which the place required. His chief demand was for two hundred horse, for already he had grasped the importance of the offensive in oriental warfare. Nothing was denied him. He was thoroughly trusted, and Tangier, as Fanshaw put it, was regarded as one of the best cards in the English hand, 'which must not be trumped.'[1] It had been constituted a separate department of state under what was called the Tangier Council, of which the Duke of York, Prince Rupert, Monk, Southampton, the Governor, the Master of the Ordnance, the Treasurer of the Navy, and Samuel Pepys were members. Though Pepys could discern something very curious in the accounts Teviot presented, none of the great men said a word, and he, like a good civil servant, held his tongue. So Teviot had all he asked, even the permission to take over Salee castle, if it were offered him, as was not unlikely, since it was in the hands of Guylan's hard-pressed rival.[2]

The energy which Teviot displayed at home was no more than was wanted. During his absence the danger that had been menacing Tangier had been making head fast. No sooner had his back been turned than it was known that Guylan had had an interview with a special envoy from the King of Spain between Tetuan and the Spanish possession of Ceuta. The news was quickly followed by a still more serious discovery. A short time previously a Swedish engineer called Martin Beckman, or Boeckmann, had arrived at Tangier to offer his professional services to the British.[3] Employment was refused him, but he was apparently given to understand that he might make himself useful as a spy in Spain. In any case he proceeded to Cadiz and made overtures to the Duke of Medina-Celi, Governor of Andalusia,

[1] Fanshaw to Clarendon, October 21 1662. *Heathcote MSS.* p. 39.

[2] Pepys's *Diary*, September 30, 1663; *S.P. Colonial, Tangier*, Bundle ii. October 20.

[3] His name is variously spelt, but afterwards, when he rose to high distinction in the British service, he was usually known as Sir Martin Beckman.

as an expert familiar with the defences of Tangier, and ready to assist in the recovery of the place to the Spanish crown. The King authorised the Duke to take the man into the royal service, but desired him not to commit himself to anything else until they had heard further from Guylan. Shortly after this Beckman gave warning to the English Consul at Cadiz that a design against Tangier was on foot, and, in a few weeks, so well did he prosper that he secured copies of a series of letters from the King to the Duke of Medina-Celi, in which the whole plan of campaign was laid down. So at least he alleged, and in England the documents were believed to be authentic. The scheme appears to have turned mainly upon the use of the galleons of the Indian Guard. At the moment they came in, when no one would suspect them of further action, instead of careening they were at once to proceed to sea again, and in concert with the Cadiz galley squadron to make a swift descent on Tangier and seize it by a *coup de main*.[1]

The whole of these documents were handed to Teviot, so that before he left England he was fully aware of what was on foot. Before the end of the year his preparations were complete, and he sailed with Lawson in time to reach Tangier on January 14, 1664, a week before the expiration of the six months' truce. A further move was made at the same time by sending Sir Richard Fanshaw as Ambassador to Madrid with instructions to mediate between Spain and Portugal, and among other matters to request immediate permission for British ships to use the Spanish ports in the Balearic islands and the Two Sicilies, and especially Port Mahon in Minorca. To further enable him to force the Spanish hand he too was furnished with copies of Beckman's documents.[2]

On Teviot's arrival he found that the Acting-Governor,

[1] The King of Spain to the Duke of Medina-Celi, September 22 (o.s.) 1663 (*Heathcote MSS.* p. 130). Despatch of Colonel Fitzgerald, Acting-Governor of Tangier, October 24 (*S.P. Colonial, Tangier*, ii.). Despatch of the Cadiz Consul, October 29, *ibid.*

[2] *Letters of Sir Richard Fanshaw*, 1702. Instruction dated January 14, 1664, p. 1 *et seq.*

anxious at the approaching termination of the truce and having no news of his chief's return, had procured its prolongation for two months on condition that nothing further should be done on the mole or the forts. To this Teviot politely told Guylan he could not agree, as his master had ordered him to proceed with the works. Hostilities consequently reopened, and at the end of February Guylan attacked in force. After a few hours' defence Teviot ordered a sally, and with such judgment and energy was it pushed home that the Moors were completely defeated with the loss of a prominent general and his standard. They returned baffled, vowing Teviot was the devil himself. They had stories that he was invulnerable, that he never slept except leaning up against some of his new works, and that he had invented flying ships and guns that ran alone.[1] The impression was real and well justified. The extraordinary intuition he displayed for dealing with orientals marks him for a high place among our early proconsuls. His conduct after the victory further reveals his power. Some of the English dead had been found mutilated. Instead of retaliating he caused the bodies of the Moors that were in his hands to be washed and clothed in fine linen and laid on biers strewn with flowers. Then, preceded by a flag of truce, he and all his force in review order solemnly escorted them to his outermost lines and delivered them to the Moors. The effect was profound, and the Moorish warriors with one accord bared their heads and ungirded their waistcloths, humbled almost to adoration.

After the victory the works went on apace. The main trouble was lime, which the Spanish officials did their best to prevent his getting, going so far as to treat his men, who came to fetch it, not only as enemies but as rebels. Still Teviot was not disheartened. 'A gallant man,' he wrote, 'never wanted arms.' His only doubt was the rankling memory of Dunkirk, surrendered after all the energy he had spent on its fortifications. He was sure, he said, that in spite of every difficulty Tangier in

[1] *Brief Relation of the Present State of Tangiers*, 1664.

two years' time, unless given up or sold, would be a very comfortable place and a pleasant too.[1]

Meanwhile Lawson with the fleet was exhibiting his characteristic activity. During the past summer the Algerines, in spite of the treaty, had been behaving as badly as ever and preying on British ships in the Straits. They had even captured Teviot's own ketch. To Algiers therefore Lawson again betook himself. By the end of March he had made them disgorge eighteen English prizes. 'But,' as he wrote, 'till it please God to make them feel some smart, no peace can be made with them but what is worse than war.'[2] So he remained where he was, blockading the port and capturing its cruisers with his wonted success till the work was interrupted about the end of May by a melancholy summons.

One of those sudden disasters had occurred which were destined to become so familiar to British arms on African soil. All through April, by a well-conceived series of reconnaissances and patrols, Teviot had been pushing his enemy further and further back while he completed the lines which he considered the nature of the ground demanded. His officers delighted to say, he fought with one hand while he built with the other, and that it was only half his business to beat the Moors. On May 3, the anniversary of the disaster in Peterborough's time, he was engaged in another such operation in force. He was acting with his usual boldness and with all the skill and care that his high experience could suggest, when in a wooded place he suddenly found himself and his staff cut off by the enemy and his troops surrounded by overwhelming numbers. In spite of the steadiness of the men, practically the whole force was annihilated. Some thirty-five officers and gentlemen volunteers and nearly four hundred rank and file were killed, and with them Teviot himself. Not ten men, it was said, escaped to bring the tale, and they told how the Governor had seized a hill with all the men he could rally, and there

[1] Teviot to Consul Westcombe at Cadiz, April 15, 1664, *Heathcote MSS.* 148; Davis, p. 60.

[2] Lawson to Fanshaw, March 28, 1664, *Heathcote MSS.* p. 148.

had died fighting to the last and dealing death around him. So perished a gallant and accomplished Scottish soldier, the first of a long list of others like him who were to lead the stormy way that Great Britain had begun to tread. Years afterwards Pepys was assured on the spot that the death of Lord Teviot was the fate of the place, 'for he took all the ways to have made it great.' [1]

Their victory won, the Moors flung themselves upon the British lines, but only to learn that if the Devil was dead his spirit lived. They were hurled back, and so great were Guylan's losses in the two actions that for a while he was forced to leave the place in peace. Then a reaction set in. The garrison became demoralised and mutinous. The opportune arrival of two royal frigates availed to check the evil, but all was not safe till Lawson, who had flown to the rescue at the first summons, appeared in the bay with the bulk of his squadron.

[1] Smith, *Life, Journal, and Correspondence of Samuel Pepys* (*Tangier Diary*), i. 444.

CHAPTER XXI

TANGIER AND ITS ENEMIES

TRAGIC as was its conclusion, the governorship of Lord Teviot had firmly established the British occupation of the Straits. It was none too soon. New danger was in the air, and Lawson's ready response to his summons was doubly welcome. 'Sir John Lawson,' wrote Fanshaw on June 5, 1664, 'is now at Tangier worthily concerned for a place of that consequence after so great a loss as it lately sustained, and especially when the rumours are so hot of a war with Holland.' For the old quarrel was burning into a flame again, and on all sides the horizon looked dark for England, and especially for her Mediterranean power. Holland steadily refused redress for the outrages which English merchants had suffered, and De Ruyter with a fresh 'corsair' squadron had been sent down to the Straits. The States had requested the British Government to co-operate with him against Algiers; but, although they had a squadron ready under Sir Robert Holmes ostensibly for that purpose, they had refused, and Holmes had sailed to the southward. His real orders were to run down to Cape Verde and there exact reprisals upon the ships and factories of the Dutch East India Company. At the time this was of course a secret, but the worst was suspected, and De Ruyter received orders to keep a careful watch on Lawson. Spain too was still hostile and known to be in communication with Guylan. France, far from friendly, had a powerful expedition on the point of sailing from Toulon, and no one knew its destination.

The strategical value of Tangier had never been so apparent, and everything seemed to threaten it. 'Guy-

lan,' continued Fanshaw in the despatch already quoted, 'hath been at them again, but bravely repulsed. The truth is, I believe there is no nation that knows Tangier which doth not wish it in any hand rather than that in which it is.' Charles was equally impressed with its importance. Neither danger nor disaster could shake his determination to hold the vantage point he had won. A new Spanish ambassador was sent to London to propose friendly terms upon which the place might be surrendered; but it was only to receive from the King's lips an answer so sharp as to make further discussion of the subject impossible. So soon as Teviot's disaster was known in England, Colonel Fitzgerald, an Irish officer who had formerly been Deputy-Governor, was sent out with reinforcements to take charge, and he actively proceeded to complete Teviot's works. By the middle of July, Fanshaw could write home again, 'Now that all is exceedingly well at Tangier, even before the recruits' arrival, give me leave to say my thoughts: that, whether the King have peace with all the world or must have war with all the world, nothing like Tangier, with the mole speedily finished to perfection, in order to the quiet enjoyment of the one or vigorous prosecution of the other.'[1]

The far-reaching ideas of which Tangier was the symbol showed no sign of abating. At this time was published a rose-coloured account of the place, and the apology the author makes for it in his preface is highly significant. He justifies the costly works: 'Firstly, because here is set down the great passage to the wealth of Africa and America, where an acre of ground is a barony and a rood a duchy. Secondly, because this and the country round is like to be that renowned scene of action which will render us considerable in this last age of the world. The French intend to make themselves famous by seeking out a convenient footing in this country; no doubt we shall be so also for keeping ours.'[2]

[1] *Letters* p. 166, to Sec. Bennet, July 19 29, 1664.
[2] *A Description of Tangiers*, 1664.

Such enthusiasm was certainly not without justification at the moment. By this time the atmosphere in the Mediterranean was clearing. All through the summer Lawson and De Ruyter had been watching one another, each suspecting the other of an intention to make some sudden attack. About August Lawson began to get the upper hand. Thanks to Fanshaw's diplomacy and Charles's resolute attitude the Spaniards at least officially had recognised the *status quo* at Tangier, and were turning their backs on the Dutch. Lawson was allowed liberty of Spanish ports for water and cleaning, while De Ruyter was everywhere refused pratique. Thus, as Lawson shifted between Cadiz and Malaga, Tangier and Algiers, keeping his fleet clean and well furnished, De Ruyter was at his wit's end to keep his eye on him, and every day his ships grew fouler. One day, early in September, the two admirals met off Malaga. Lawson had been informed by the Spaniards that De Ruyter had just received orders so pressing that the courier who carried them had travelled from Holland in seven days. With cordial civilities he did his best to find out what the orders were, and, failing, held away to cover Tangier. The fact was that news had come of Holmes's reprisals at Cape Verde. The mysterious orders which De Ruyter had received were that he was to follow him with all speed, and a few weeks later, after vainly trying to careen his ships at Cadiz, he disappeared out into the Atlantic.[1]

The French danger had also passed. The Toulon expedition, which had grown to sixty sail of war-ships, galleys, and transports, after ominously assembling at Port Mahon under the Duc de Beaufort and Du Quesne, had sailed away up the sea, and were soon busy with Louis's African venture to the eastward of Algiers, and well away from the British sphere of action. Tangier was left in peace, with the result that by October the whole of the lines and outworks which Teviot had projected were complete, and thus, as the war drew nearer and nearer, Colonel Fitzgerald felt he was able to take

[1] *Michel de Ruiter*, p. 208 *et seq.*

good care of himself and his charge.[1] In view of the now inevitable war with Holland, Lawson went home to take up a higher command, and Admiral Thomas Allin, who had been one of Rupert's captains in his pirate days and was then Commander-in-Chief in the Downs, came out to succeed him. Before he had been more than a month on the station he had completed Lawson's work by procuring from Algiers a renewal of the old treaty, and in reporting his success he was able to send news of an event beside which even Teviot's disaster must have seemed eclipsed.[2]

Throughout the summer Beaufort with his formidable force had been busy making good his hold on the African coast. The place ultimately chosen was not Stora but Gigeri, now called Jigelli, a little to the westward.[3] On July 22 the place had been captured with considerable skill, but at the cost of some four hundred killed, besides wounded. Still the news was hailed in France, especially by the mercantile community, with high satisfaction, and a convoy was despatched from Toulon under the Marquis de Martel with an abundance of stores and two troops of horse. The idea which Louis had in his mind was the establishment of a permanent naval base similar to that which the English were creating at Tangier. Colbert, however, was unwilling to commit himself definitely to Gigeri until it was clearly ascertained to be the most suitable spot. He called for a report from the naval officers. Du Quesne, though not entirely satisfied with the place, thought it might be made a useful harbour, and there was every prospect of its being held. About the middle of October, Beaufort, having seen the military well established, moved to the westward to make an attempt on Bougie, leaving Martel and his vessels in the road. No sooner was he gone than a sort of panic appears to have seized the troops, and, as some said, the officers as

[1] Colonel Fitzgerald to Fanshaw, October 8–18, 1664, *Heathcote MSS.* 167.

[2] *Heathcote MSS.* November 13–23, 1664, p. 169. *Fanshaw's Letters*, December 2 (n.s.), p. 347.

[3] In contemporary documents the place is called Gigeri, Gigheria, Gergily, Gigery, Jejure, and the like.

well. In constant skirmishes with the enemy they had been suffering serious loss. In spite of their efforts their assailants were still pressing closer, even erecting fresh works, till the cry was raised that the French lines were no longer tenable. From hour to hour, as the enemy's numbers increased, the panic grew till it became uncontrollable. The troops openly said that, unless the place were evacuated, they would desert and turn Turk, and finally the officers decided to re-embark them in Martel's ships. Four days after Beaufort had left, it was done – in the dead of night and in haste. Sick and wounded, the whole of the stores and baggage, guns to the number of over a hundred —all were abandoned: and so in a shameless flight ended Louis's first attempt to extend his power in the Mediterranean. In France the shock was severely felt. Everything was done to hush up the disgrace, but the loss had been too great for concealment, and the disappointment of the merchants too deep. And to fill the bitter cup there was always Tangier growing every month in importance to show what might have been achieved.[1]

Thus, in comparison with the French misfortunes, the English position on the eve of Charles's first struggle for the dominion of the sea was highly favourable—so favourable indeed that Tangier was left to shift for itself. When, towards the end of November, Allin returned from Algiers with his squadron, he found orders awaiting him to seize the Dutch Smyrna convoy as it attempted to pass the Straits. It was in anticipation of some such stroke that De Ruyter had been left shadowing Lawson all the summer; but now the coast was clear. War had not yet been declared, though it had practically begun. By this time it was known that when De Ruyter left the Mediterranean he had sailed southward against the English factories in Guinea in revenge for what Holmes had done. Allin's orders therefore were but another step into the inevitable struggle that had to be fought out. Unfortunately, before the Smyrna convoy appeared, Allin met with a severe disaster. One evening about the middle of December, having sighted what he believed to be a Dutch fleet in

[1] Jal, *Du Quesne*, i. 313–26 Guérin, iii. 156–8.

the last of the daylight, he gave chase through the Straits. It was a foul and rainy night, and so dark that he and four of his captains, in their eagerness, ran themselves ashore on the Spanish coast near Gibraltar. Two of the frigates were totally wrecked, and, though he managed to get his flagship off again, and to save the other two frigates, they were all severely damaged. He was in this plight when another Dutch fleet of fourteen sail appeared, in which were three men-of-war. He had now but seven of his nine vessels left, but he attacked at once, crippled as he was. The three men-of-war escaped into Cadiz. Of the merchantmen he sank two and captured two, one of which proved a rich prize. Under the circumstances it was a creditable achievement, and, but for the unlucky mishap that preceded it, would probably have accomplished all that had been expected.[1]

In pursuance probably of the old policy of concentration on the enemy's main fleet, Allin was now ordered home with a convoy, and the Straits were abandoned to the Dutch. Some anxiety was felt by men on the spot. De Ruyter was still somewhere to the southward; three Dutch men-of-war were in Cadiz, only waiting for Allin's disappearance to put to sea, and private vessels were also being equipped.[2] To give heart to the garrison Lord Belasyse came out as Governor—a man of little military reputation, but energetic and sanguine, and a great person at Court. His appointment at least put an end to a demoralising rumour. During the winter it had been persistently reported that Louis, having failed at Gigeri, had offered to purchase Tangier, and that Charles had agreed to sell. Quidnuncs could even name the sum.[3]

But the tale could not survive the arrival of Lord

[1] Allin to Fanshaw, December 17, 1664, *Heathcote MSS.* p. 172, and *S.P. Dom.* cvi. f. 111. Same to same, December 25, *Heathcote MSS.* p. 172 and *S.P. Dom.* cvii. f. 38.

[2] Same to Coventry, Gibraltar Bay, January 15, 1665, *Heathcote MSS.* p. 174. He did not get away till the end of February, *ibid.* p. 179.

[3] Fanshaw to Lord Holles, March 29, 1665, *Heathcote MSS.* 183. W. Blunden to Fanshaw, April 10, *ibid.*, where he says the rumour arose from an English frigate transporting French treasure.

Belasyse, and only served to mark the increasing importance of the place. 'I conceive,' wrote a merchant to Fanshaw, 'it is the most important place in Christendom for his Majesty and the good of our nation; and when the mole is built and magazines, it may maintain itself with little or no charge to the Crown. It was an obscure place and not known till delivered to his Majesty, and now the whole world sees how much the case is altered by the change of possessor.' Fanshaw himself was entirely of this opinion, and his only anxiety was lest Belasyse should not be left ships enough, as he said, 'to make our stake good in the Mediterranean against an upstart fleet which the Dutch were then scrambling together.'

But no squadron was spared for Tangier, though letters of marque were sent out for private ships; and during the summer, while the war was raging in the Narrow Seas, the upstart Dutch fleet blockaded the port. But it mattered little. It had been fully provisioned and the mole was so far advanced that a battery had been established upon it that kept the enemy at a distance. The blockade was consequently loose and easily run by the British frigates that from time to time appeared with convoys or despatches. Merchantmen too were able to use it as a port of refuge in running the gauntlet through the Straits. In the autumn a fleet of twenty Levant merchantmen and victuallers for Tangier, under a weak convoy, arrived. The Dutch attacked, and though they defeated the war ships, all but four of the merchantmen got safely into Tangier and were able to pursue their voyage.[1] The effect was—according to a calculation made for the first year of the war—that the Dutch did not capture enough prizes to cover much more than half the cost of maintaining their squadron.[2] In vain the Spanish officials in Andalusia did their best to thwart the progress of the port; in vain they continued their intrigues with Guylan. The place throve in spite of every difficulty; the mole pushed further and further to seaward; and in the face of

[1] *S.P. Colonial, Tangier*, iv. f. 10.

[2] Consul Westcombe of Cadiz to Fanshaw, December 31, 1665, *Heathcot MSS.* p. 220

every enemy England was slowly locking her hold upon the Mediterranean.

If to Spain and Holland the situation was unendurable, still more so was it to France. It was impossible for Louis, seeing what his ambitions were, to sit quietly and see his fetters forged. The first battle in the war had resulted in a defeat for the Dutch. It seemed certain that, if left alone, their sea power must be crushed, and this Louis could not permit. It would mean that England, well placed as she was, would rule undisputed upon the seas both within and without the Straits, and that hers, not his, would be the inheritance of Spain. After an ineffectual effort, therefore, to induce England to make peace, he resolved to force her into it by a declaration of war.

It was no fancied danger that disturbed him. Already at Brussels, in view of the certainty that sooner or later France must throw in her lot with the Dutch, the most far-sighted of Englishmen was at work. No man so clearly foresaw the formidable expansion of France as Sir William Temple, and no one so justly apprehended the way to curb it. As minister resident at Brussels, he was deep in the subject with the Spanish Viceroy, and at his suggestion was urging upon Charles's Government an offensive and defensive alliance with Spain against the coming danger. It was always in Flanders, since the days of Alva, that had sprung and thriven the idea that the salvation of Spain lay in an understanding with England, and it was from there the idea was most likely to grow to fruition. But in the design which Temple was formulating there was a new factor that made its possibilities more formidable than ever. A main feature of the proposed alliance, suggested apparently by the Viceroy, was that Spain should permit England to establish a naval base in Sardinia. With a squadron of frigates acting from there, and the command of the Straits at Tangier, it seemed that the French trade in the Mediterranean, on which Louis so much depended for his resources, might be annihilated. Temple received the idea with enthusiasm, and for doing so has been ridiculed even by his admirers.

'In ascribing to our naval power,' says his latest biographer, 'an overwhelming influence upon the affairs of Europe, Temple was not justified either by past history or by the events of this particular war.'[1] But he is certainly justified by future history and the wars to come. Nor is it clear that, if Spain and England had united for naval action in the Mediterranean, the result of the particular war might not have been radically changed. The French Toulon fleet, as we shall see, could never have passed the Straits, and the diversion, which prevented a decisive English victory in the Narrow Seas, would never have been made.

Of that at least there can be no doubt whatever. The French plan of campaign was founded on a concentration of their own fleet with that of the Dutch in the North Sea. Beaufort, who was in command at Toulon, was to come out of the Straits and effect a junction with the Atlantic squadron under Du Quesne; and, unless they were in time to pass the Channel before the English fleet got to sea, they were to endeavour to join hands with the Dutch main fleet north-about. To formulate the plan was to be at once confronted with the difficulty of getting Beaufort out of the Mediterranean. 'To ensure the security of M. de Beaufort's passage,' wrote Colbert, 'I think the only way is to increase the number of his vessels by uniting with them a division of those which are at present on the west coast, and to strengthen his squadron with the largest number of fire-ships possible.' As a further precaution he desired that the ships detailed for this purpose from the Atlantic ports should go down as far as the Straits and effect the junction there; and even so Colbert was doubtful whether the operation could be carried out successfully unless they were sure of a friendly reception in Cadiz.[2]

With this project in view war was declared in January 1666, but no sooner was the step definitely taken than Sir Jeremy Smith, an old Commonwealth officer, was despatched with a strong squadron to the Straits.

[1] Courtenay, *Memoirs of Sir W. Temple*, 1836, i. 73.
[2] Jal, *Du Quesne*, i. 373.

His mission was primarily convoy duty to protect the Levant trade; but Colbert saw his whole combination struck at the root, and sent down urgent orders to Beaufort to get to sea immediately, and drive Smith from the Mediterranean before he could enter the Straits. But Beaufort was unable to move. In despair Colbert ordered the Toulon squadron of galleys to be fitted for sea with all speed, for, as he said, Smith would probably be reinforced before Beaufort could get at him. To spur the galley commander to his highest efforts he told him he had the chance of striking the winning stroke of the war—the *coup de partie*—in the Mediterranean.[1] Colbert at any rate did not conceal from himself where the key of the situation lay, and the anxiety which he displayed certainly does not belie the importance which Temple had attached to naval operations in the Mediterranean.

By the middle of February Sir Jeremy Smith reached Cadiz, where he was allowed to water, and during March he was about the Straits and in touch with Tangier with fifteen or sixteen frigates. The effect was immediate. Beaufort's intended move was checked. In vain Colbert dwelt on the insignificance of the English force and urged his admiral to attack. So long as Smith held the station Beaufort would not or could not stir. Seamen were hard to get, and yet he kept adding to his squadron and fitting out fire-ship after fire-ship to the derision of the English.[2] Besides his fire-ships and auxiliary vessels he had thirty men-of-war of his own of all rates, and eight of the 'upstart' fleet, which the Dutch had scrambled together and which had retired before Smith into Toulon.[3] Even so he did not move till a squadron of twelve galleys was ready to accompany him to the Straits. Never was the advantage of the Tangier station more emphatically

[1] *Lettres de Colbert*, III. i. 59 and 69, February 15–25 and March 6–16, 1666.

[2] *Ibid.* III. i. 69; Jal, *Du Quesne*, i. 409; *Heathcote MSS.* 243.

[3] It is interesting to note that Beaufort's fleet contained a hospital ship. The other auxiliaries were tenders or 'Matelotes' to larger ships. Jal, *Du Quesne*, i. 390; *Heathcote MSS.* 251.

declared, and yet at the critical moment it was thrown away.

At home the naval action of the French was not the gravest anxiety. Louis was also engaged in a formidable diplomatic campaign to isolate England by a widespread coalition of all the powers that had reason to be jealous of her predominance on the sea. In London therefore the Government was rightly absorbed in the importance of crushing the Dutch sea power before the threatened coalition could take effect. The campaign of the previous year had fully convinced them of the necessity of concentrating at all hazards an overwhelming force in the North Sea. Its results had been far from satisfactory. The main fleet had been under the Duke of York, Prince Rupert, and Sandwich, with Sir John Lawson as senior vice-admiral. At the battle of Lowestoft they had done well enough. But in the death of Lawson, who was mortally wounded in the action, the fleet lost its most ardent spirit, and the fruits of the victory had not been gathered with sufficient activity. The two Princes betook themselves ashore to enjoy the sweets of the victory, and Sandwich had been left in sole command. In his inadequate or unwilling hands everything that the late success should have secured was lost. As usual the Dutch were plunged into demoralising political dissensions over their defeat, and could not agree on the appointment of commanders for the next year's campaign. De Ruyter was the only man likely to secure confidence. Everything depended on his safe return, and he was still no one quite knew where. Having taken a full revenge for Holmes's reprisals on the West Coast of Africa, he had proceeded to the West Indies, and, after doing considerable damage both there and off Newfoundland, was feeling his way home along the coast of Norway. It was a hazardous end to his great cruise. Encumbered with prizes, and with his fleet barely seaworthy, he seemed a certain prey to an admiral in command of the North Sea. Yet Sandwich, with everything in his favour, failed to intercept him. By a miracle, which he devoutly attributed to the special intervention of Providence, he reached the

Texel in safety, and just in time to receive the command of the main fleet, and to give new heart to the despondent Dutch with the story of his long and eventful cruise.

Monk at the Admiralty was naturally furious. Sandwich had further clouded his reputation with some irregularities about prize money which the stern old Cromwellian made the most of. A change of command became inevitable. The Duke of York was persuaded not to endanger his life further. Sandwich, to ease his fall, was appointed Ambassador to Spain with instructions to complete the negotiations which Fanshaw had been hitherto conducting. Rupert was to remain, but not alone. As usual, when in a difficulty, it was to Monk the country looked to save the situation. During the terrible year that had passed the redoubtable old General had remained alone in London to fight the plague when every one else had run away to Oxford, and he had been conducting single-handed practically the whole administration of the country. With considerable nervousness the King was persuaded to make a still higher call upon his patriotism, and sent for him to see if he could be induced to go to sea again. The devoted old officer immediately consented with the sole proviso that his wife must not be told; and when it was known that Cromwell's right-hand man, the hero of the old war, was girding on his sword again, victory was regarded as certain.

It was now apparently that the fatal though perhaps necessary step was taken. Monk, as we know, had always been in favour of sacrificing the Straits to his inflexible belief in concentration on the enemy's main fleet. Had he been aware of the inefficient condition of the Toulon squadron his orthodoxy might have been relaxed. For a time it even looked as though his old strategy was to be modified. While his preparations for the coming campaign were pushed forward with all possible vigour, a small squadron was detached to carry Sandwich to Spain. It reached Coruña in the middle of March, while Colbert was doing his best to drive Beaufort to sea. In the south, where Beaufort's weakness was better known, it was naturally believed that

Sandwich's squadron had come to reinforce Smith and place him in a condition to hold the Straits. But as a matter of fact the orders it brought were the reverse of what was expected. Smith and his squadron were recalled. It had never apparently been intended that he should remain longer than was necessary to collect the homeward bound Levant trade. Smith, moreover, was an officer on whom Monk placed great reliance, and such men, as he never ceased to lament, were growing scarcer every day among the crowd of dandy captains whom the Court inflicted on him. So once more the Straits were abandoned at the most critical hour. Still, Monk can hardly be blamed. It may be that to risk a squadron at the Straits would have been the more brilliant and daring strategy, but it is as certain as war can be that had either plan of campaign been drastically carried out all would have gone well.

On April 19 Beaufort at last put to sea. In ten days' time he was at Alicante, where he was told that Smith had left Cadiz homeward bound on March 25. The information was not accurate. Perhaps Beaufort did not believe it. At any rate he moved cautiously down to Malaga, and there anchored for further intelligence and to allow the galley squadron which had lost touch to close up. On its arrival he ventured as far as Gibraltar, and finding there certain assurance that Smith had gone home a month before, he dismissed the galleys and proceeded to Cadiz. Considering that Beaufort's orders were to make for the Straits with all speed and defeat Smith before he could escape, his cautious advance tells a plain tale. He and his officers knew their fleet too well. In fact, it was no fleet at all, but a mere mass of ships. Many of them were not even men-of-war, but merchantmen purchased and hastily equipped. All were still so short of men that Beaufort had had to send emissaries to Algiers to redeem captives at any price, and in Cadiz he pressed every Frenchman he could find in a foreign ship. So lamentable was his manœuvring that when he turned into the bay some Genoese, who had availed themselves of his convoy, declared they were ashamed to see how the

Frenchmen handled their sails, and that 'twenty English frigates would rout them all to pieces.'[1] This was doubtless too much to say; but it is probable that if Smith, reinforced with Sandwich's ships, had been permitted to hold his ground, Beaufort would not have attempted to pass the Straits until Du Quesne appeared to help him with the Atlantic squadron. It is certain that if single-handed he had made the attempt in face of so compact and formidable a squadron with so strong a man as Jeremy Smith at its head, his fleet, even if victorious, would have ceased to be a factor in the campaign capable of disturbing the English strategy in the Narrow Seas. As it was, with no enemy to oppose him, Beaufort got no further than Lisbon. Louis was nervous lest a division of the English main fleet might be detached against him, and after passing the Straits he received orders to put into the Tagus and remain there till Du Quesne could join him.[2]

A very serious aspect of the strategy which the English Admiralty adopted was the danger to which it exposed Tangier. Every one believed, in view of the nature of Beaufort's force, that Tangier was his real objective. Fortunately it was in a very favourable condition for defence. A new Moorish conqueror had arisen who was pressing Guylan hard, and in alarm he reopened negotiations with the English Governor, which resulted in a firm peace. This done, Belasyse went home in one of Smith's frigates, leaving a certain Colonel Norwood in command. So satisfied was this officer with the strength of the place that, as Beaufort's great fleet approached, he was in no way disturbed. Indeed, the prospect of an attack seemed to him too good to be true. 'We are looking out sharply,' he wrote to Fanshaw, 'for Monsieur Beaufort with the French Armada to attack, as is given out in all ports. I am so charitable for that nation as to think their affairs are not managed by such weak counsels; for if they force us to set our wits to theirs we shall, to human under-

[1] Consul Westcombe to Fanshaw, May 13-23, 1666, *Heathcote MSS.* 251.

[2] Jal, *Du Quesne*, i. 399 *n.* and 410.

standing, use them no better than they were treated at Gigeri.'[1]

Norwood was right. The counsels of France were not so unsound. For all the thorn that Tangier was in Louis's side, he was not going to risk his fleet for it. In ordering Beaufort to Lisbon he had told him his first duty was to preserve his force, which, as he said, was necessary for an infinity of reasons, and, inactive as it was, it did its work. As Beaufort lay in the Tagus, forbidden to move, Monk and Rupert put to sea with a fleet of eighty sail, dynamically superior to anything the Dutch could bring against them. But no sooner had they reached the Downs than a message came from the King to say that the French fleet was approaching and that Rupert was to proceed to the Isle of Wight to meet it with one of the three squadrons. Thus was Monk's strategy entirely upset. It depended for success on throwing the whole weight of the British main fleet on one division of the allies. He had chosen it deliberately in preference to the other possible plan of keeping the Toulon fleet within the Straits. Yet at the worst possible moment Stuart futility had forced upon him a plan that was neither one thing nor the other, and it immediately earned its reward.

The wind that carried Rupert to the westward brought out De Ruyter with eighty-five sail; Monk had but fifty-six; but, catching De Ruyter at a disadvantage, he made a brilliantly conceived attack, which, if Rupert had only been present in support, must have inflicted a serious, if not a fatal, blow to the Dutch. As it was, Monk could achieve nothing decisive. For two days he fought single-handed with all his old skill and confident impetuosity. On the third day Rupert, having found the alarm was false, managed to rejoin with part of his squadron; but, though the fight continued till the fourth day, the English were too heavily overweighted throughout for their superior tactics and discipline to tell, and the result of the King's faulty strategy or, as it more probably was,

[1] *Heathcote MSS.* p. 250, May 9–19, 1666.

the Duke of York's, was a victory for the Dutch. Two months later, on St. James's day, the balance was redressed off the mouth of the Thames by an action which gave the English complete command of the sea and kept Beaufort ingloriously in Brest. Still the effect he had had on the war was never recovered. Charles's finances could not stand the strain of the prolonged struggle against the combined forces which threatened him, and peace negotiations were set on foot. They received the support of Louis, who had gained all he desired in seeing the two great sea powers cripple one another, and he was ready to begin his long-nursed attack on Spain. In May 1667 a peace congress assembled at Breda. Under cover of it, when things seemed to be going against them, the Dutch suddenly appeared in the Thames and carried out their famous exploit against the ships laid up at Chatham. Peace immediately followed, but it was still at the expense of Holland, for it left England in full possession of the Dutch colonies in North America, and with the smart of a humiliation which she never forgot or forgave.

Her position, too, within the Straits remained unshaken. In vain Louis had clamoured again and again for twelve frigates which the Dutch had undertaken to send to join his galleys in the Mediterranean. In vain, too, had he urged them to combine with him in intercepting the fleet which in December 1666 was starting to supply Tangier. The Dutch were too much disgusted with the part he had played in the war to disturb their dispositions for an end which chiefly concerned French interests.[1] So Tangier remained unmolested, and had even been able to make itself felt offensively through privateers which Norwood induced the merchants to assist him in fitting out. Nor was it only by prizes that it was enriched. An increasing trade was also springing up with other Moorish ports, and, better still, as soon as Louis commenced his war with Spain by the invasion of the Spanish Netherlands, the French merchants, who

[1] Jal, *Du Quesne*, i. 412, 459, 469, 470.

could no longer reside in Andalusia, began to make the new port their headquarters, and a flourishing trade sprang up which seemed to promise that the dream of making Tangier the great emporium of the South might be realised before many years were passed.[1]

[1] Norwood to Legge, June 15, 1657, *Dartmouth MSS.* p. 16.

CHAPTER XXII

TANGIER AS A NAVAL STATION

With the close of the Dutch war the English hold on the Mediterranean had survived the first great effort which France made to break it. The coalition with the Northern powers which Louis had arranged to isolate England fell to pieces, and was succeeded by the famous Triple Alliance which Sir William Temple negotiated between England, Holland, and Sweden, and the French King abandoned his attempt to deprive England of her commanding position at sea by force.

Four years' peace, the outcome of Temple's alliance, were in store for her, and during that time Tangier continued to flourish and give promise of all that was hoped from it. The internal dissensions of the Moors kept it free from serious molestation from that quarter, and the works went on quietly with an increasing trade. In 1668 it was thought safe to reduce the garrison to one regiment and half a troop, and in the following year it was given a civil municipal government, as though it were a permanent part of the empire. The same year Lord Middleton, the cavalier soldier of fortune, who had been Monk's chief opponent in his famous highland campaign, came out to replace Lord Belasyse, and quickly displayed his capacity for the post. He made the civil and military elements pull together, encouraged the growing trade, and further increased the strength of the defences. Above all, he devoted his attention to the completion of the mole. As two of the three original contractors were dead, the Tangier Council took over the work, and it was thus placed directly under the Governor. In August 1668 Sandwich specially reported from Madrid that 380 yards

were finished, and at the end of 1669 Cholmley, the engineer, said it had been making continual good progress for three years. During the storms of that winter, however, a serious breach was made. It was the first symptom of trouble, and the noise of it, as Cholmley wrote, 'filled all the gazettes of Europe.'[1] But if those who viewed the growing port with apprehension saw hope in the trouble, they were doomed to disappointment. It was found that by building the stones in massive wooden chests and then sinking them in their place, as had been done at Leghorn and Genoa, the difficulty could be overcome, and as soon as the system was adopted the work went on again merrily.

A noteworthy effect of the progress which the place was making is seen in the increasing importance which Louis was attaching to his Languedoc canal. The plans had been finally passed on January 1, 1665, and the works had been in progress over five years. The canal was to have a depth of twelve feet and a surface width of ten 'toises,' or about sixty-four feet, a capacity which Colbert hoped would be enough for the largest barks, and even for dismantled galleys. About the time when he had declared war against England he had pressed the engineer to revise the plans with the special view of making the canal passable for galleys. The engineer had apparently reported that it was not feasible, and the matter dropped, but not for long.

It was in the year 1669, after the Triple Alliance had forced upon France the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, that Colbert had set himself seriously to reconstruct the French navy. Following Mazarin's lead, Louis had succeeded in getting the Admiralty into his own hands by vesting it in his baby son. His ambassador in London was ordered to inquire diligently into the English naval administration and their system of naval warfare. On the analogy of his standing army regular marine companies were established to provide skilled crews for the royal ships; and on all sides the work of reform was earnestly undertaken as a preliminary that was absolutely necessary to French expan-

[1] Davis, i. 96.

sion. Among other matters the idea of making the canal of real strategical value was revived more emphatically than ever. 'In spite,' wrote Colbert to his engineer, 'of the reasons in your letter and report of three or four years ago, I persist in telling you that if we could make our maritime canal and the locks practicable for galleys there would be nothing so greatly advantageous for the King's service—seeing that if some day there is war in yonder seas and also in the Channel, the thirty galleys, which we could pass by the canal, to make war during June, July, August, and September might very likely decide all the actions.' He enclosed the dimensions of a galley, and told the engineer he was to examine the canal and the locks, and, if they were not capacious enough, to report how they could be enlarged. The harassed officer naturally made difficulties over the presumed elasticity of his works. Six weeks later Colbert wrote again somewhat more reasonably. 'You see,' said he, 'there could be nothing so great and considerable for the sea power of the King as the easy passage of his galleys from the Mediterranean to the ocean; but if it is impossible think no more about it.' In the spring of 1670, however, he was still harping on the idea, but apparently nothing could be done. Yet the correspondence remains to mark the keen appreciation that Louis had of the weakness of his maritime position and of the mingled obsolete and advanced ideas with which he sought to remedy it. The idea that galleys could still redress the balance of sailing fleets marks an almost startling failure to grasp the new conditions of maritime warfare, while the project of securing interior lines by means of a ship canal anticipated the very latest expedients of naval strategy.[1]

The anxiety which Tangier and the condition of affairs of which it was the outward manifestation were causing in France was in marked contrast to the calm which the place itself was enjoying. This was in a great measure due to the fact that for the time it had ceased to be for the Mediterranean powers the most serious centre

[1] *Histoire de Ricquet; Lettres de Colbert*, III. i. 110, and vol. iv. June 18, August 2, 1669, March 27, 1670 (o.s.)

of interest. It was one of those rare moments when the intestine quarrels of Christendom were hushed, and the attention of its kings was called away to the greater struggle between East and West. At Lisbon Sandwich had completed Fanshaw's work, and concluded a treaty which finally recognised the new kingdom of Portugal and set free the British troops that had been engaged in defending it against Spain. At Aix-la-Chapelle, under the pressure of the Triple Alliance, a still more important peace had been signed, which ended the war between France and Spain; but at the same time, by vastly increasing Louis's power, marked him for the great and disturbing factor he was to become. The advantage which England gained by being able to pose as the peacemaker of Europe was the recognition by Spain of all her conquests and colonies in the West Indies and America. But though the pacification was due mainly to the menace of the Triple Alliance and the overwhelming naval power at its command, it was directly brought about by the mediation of the new Pope, Clement IX. To him the dissensions of the powers were as heartrending as ever they were to his crusading forerunners. His eyes were fixed upon Crete, around which the Candiote war had been continually raging ever since Blake so nearly plunged into it, and where the Venetians with ebbing strength were still heroically holding back the Moslem flood. For five and twenty years Candia, like another Troy, had been the centre of the epic strife, pressed by an interminable siege, to which the adventurous spirits of all lands gathered to shed their blood and flesh their swords with all the fierce spirit of Godfrey de Bouillon and Richard. Still year by year the advantage ever grew to the Turks. All that the Papal navy and the Knights of Malta could do to support the exhausted Venetians availed but little. France, preoccupied at first with her intestine troubles, and then with her hunger for the inheritance of Spain, could spare still less to assist. As for England, who might have turned the scale had Cromwell done more than dream, she was disarmed by the maritime and commercial privileges she had wrung from

the Barbary states. Holland, too, no less than England, France, and the minor Italian states, was more concerned with the advantage of the Turkish trade than with the Mussulman peril, and so the maritime forces of Christendom could never be brought at one.[1] But now, at last, when Candia was in extremity, and the old terror took a more glaring shape, Clement was able to arouse something of the lost mediæval spirit. It was in France, which in modern times had been the most backward of all the Mediterranean powers against the common enemy, that he found the readiest response. By the end of 1668 Louis had decided to come to the rescue with an expedition under the Duc de Beaufort himself; but, in order to avoid an open rupture with the Porte, it was to sail nominally under the Papal flag.

A really powerful force was prepared. Besides ten fire-ships and small craft, it included sixteen ships of war, and as many transports, with a large number of troops. With this fleet Beaufort appeared before the beleaguered town early in June 1669. The landing was successfully accomplished, and the Turks were being driven from point to point, when suddenly a deafening explosion hushed the sounds of battle. It came from a redoubt which the French seamen had just taken. There was an instant alarm that all the works were mined, and a panic ensued that bid fair to degenerate into a rout. To check it Beaufort immediately placed himself at the head of his best troops, flung himself on the advancing Turks, and was never seen again. It was a disaster that could not be retrieved. The French troops, instead of raising the siege, could barely hold their ground, and the mutual recriminations that ensued rapidly demoralised the Christian army. Thirteen galleys of France, with three fresh French regiments, arrived a few weeks later, and further reinforcements were preparing at Toulon. Louis was putting forth a strength which marked more clearly than

[1] The English refused the Venetian request for assistance for fear 'we should have all our stock in Turkey forfeited.' See Arlington to Temple, Jan. 8, 1669 (*Arlington Letters*, i. p. 384). The Dutch, it appears, were ready to help if we would.

ever his determination to take the place which in the days of Lepanto had belonged to Spain. But all to no purpose. One tremendous effort to dislodge the Turks by a bombardment from the whole of the assembled ships only ended in fresh disaster. The French troops re-embarked with a loss of 1,300 killed and 1,500 wounded, and at the end of August the Venetians capitulated. So ended the famous Candiote war in a fresh advance of the Mussulman power and another rebuff to Louis in his attempt to make himself felt in the Mediterranean.

What reward he looked to, had success attended the great effort, we cannot tell. Following as it did upon his other attempts to spread his power to the South, we seem to see him seeking in the Eastern half of the sea a means of redressing the balance that was against him in the West. Had he perhaps anticipated the vast idea of the *Consilium Ægyptiacum* which Leibnitz was about to present to him? Already the young German philosopher, eager to divert the ambition of Louis from European conquest, was preparing his famous treatise, in which, with a wealth of historical and geographical learning, and a convincing grasp of the economical and political conditions of his project, he was trying to tempt Louis to conquer Egypt. Seated there, he argued, where the Red Sea and Mediterranean met at the centre of the world, a Prince like Louis would be able to draw into his lap the wealth and power of the East which his Western rivals were fast absorbing, and would become the master not only of Europe but of Asia too. It is hardly possible the idea was not already in the air. It is certain, at any rate, that when the proposal of a then almost unknown scholar was placed before Louis in January 1672, he was sufficiently interested at once to send for the author to explain his design. Nothing further came of it. The influence of Louvois, Louis's minister of war, was in the ascendant to hold him to military adventure in Europe, and probably his unhappy experience at Candia taught him to take a view of the difficulties too grave for the learning and enthusiasm of Leibnitz to explain away.[1]

[1] *Œuvres de Leibnitz* (ed. Foucher de Careil), vol. v.

The Turks at least appreciated to the full the significance of their victory. In the Mussulman world it produced a profound impression of returning strength, which was immediately displayed in renewed activity among the Barbary states. Fortunately England was once more in a position to curb them. Already, at the end of 1668, she had sufficiently recovered from the shock of the Dutch war to send a squadron into the Mediterranean. It was under Sir Thomas Allin, who, as Admiral of the White Squadron in 1666, had largely added to his reputation and had led the attack in the victorious 'St. James's' action. After demonstrating before Algiers and Salee with some effect he had gone home. But so soon as his back was turned their piracies grew as bad as ever, and in the summer of 1669 he returned with a still stronger squadron.[1] About the middle of August he appeared before Algiers with an advanced division of eight sail to present the English demands. He had been met with the news of Beaufort's death, and the retreat of the French to Toulon. The capitulation of Candia was already on foot and it was hardly likely that the Algerines would be inclined to submission. After some fruitless negotiation they flatly refused all satisfaction, and the first week in September Allin commenced hostilities. A day or two later he was joined by his second division, under Sir Edward Spragge, a cavalier officer, who, after serving in the Royalist army during the civil war, is believed, like Allin, to have followed Rupert on the high seas. During the late war he had risen to vice-flag rank in the main fleet, and had highly distinguished himself in the darkest hours by his bold defence of the Thames when the Dutch were trying to force their way up towards London. His advent brought Allin's force up to eighteen sail, besides fire-ships. It was the normal strength of the British Mediterranean squadron and the normal operations followed. A blockade was established, while with his detached cruisers Allin soon established a mastery over the Algerine navy. He continued the work with success

[1] His journal for this voyage is among the *Dartmouth MSS.*, and extracts of it are given in *Hist. MSS. Com.* XI. v. 17–19.

till September 1670, when he was succeeded by Spragge. Under a revised plan of operations the new chief was set free from convoy duty and was able to devote his whole squadron to the Algerine cruisers. Furthermore, arrangements had been made to provide him with a base of supply at Port Mahon, and acting from there he soon outdid his predecessor.[1] Prizes came fast, till in May 1671 the work culminated in a really important success. Having heard that a number of Algerine men-of-war were lying at Bougie, he proceeded thither with all the force he could collect. He immediately sent in a fire-ship, but it miscarried, and before he could prepare another the enemy, as usual, had time to protect themselves with a powerful boom. But Spragge would not own himself beaten. Undismayed, he tried again and quickly demonstrated what was possible to boats handled with skill and determination against these temporary defences. Under a heavy fire the boom was cut, his smallest frigate was sent in for a fire-ship, and so boldly was it pushed home that the entire Algerine squadron, consisting of seven vessels of from twenty-four to thirty guns, was completely destroyed. So exasperated were the corsairs that a Palace revolution followed at Algiers. The reigning Dey was put to death and his successor forced to make peace.

It was not only in Algiers that the lesson was felt. In France, too, it was a bitter pill. She had been attempting to carry on a similar war against Tunis, but with little or no result, and the success of the English acutely emphasised the failure that seemed to dog every step she took upon the Mediterranean. The King, so Colbert wrote in referring to Spragge's exploit, was weary of hearing of English successes when his own men did nothing.[2] All the minister's efforts to give France a worthy position upon the sea seemed still to be of no avail. Of his own views on the situation in the Mediter-

[1] *Hist. MSS. Com., Various Collections*, ii. 140, 152, 156–7. It was not purely for strategic reasons that Port Mahon was chosen, but also to keep captains out of commercial ports, where they were tempted to carry merchants' treasure and so neglected their cruising. Allin was said to be an arch-offender.

[2] *Lettres de Colbert*, III. i. 390, *n.*

ranean, and of his idea of ameliorating it, we are permitted a curious glimpse, which reveals him bent on supplanting England at Tangier. In September following Spragge's success, Ralph Montagu, the British Ambassador to France, had an interview at Dunkirk with Estrades, to whom he was commissioned to deliver a letter from the English King. It was at the time when Charles was playing his extraordinary secret game with Louis, by which through an offensive and defensive alliance with France he hoped to make himself despotic at home, and abroad to punish the Dutch and have a share in the dismemberment of the Spanish empire. Estrades had not been taken into Louis's confidence, and was naturally jealous. Moreover, he had reason to believe that he had also lost the goodwill of the English King, which he had formerly enjoyed so intimately. He therefore determined to assert himself and recover his position by warning Montagu of the dangers in which Louis meant to entangle his unwary ally. Among other things he cautioned him that Charles must 'never hearken to the parting with Tangier.' He knew—so he said—Colbert's heart was set on it, and that to his knowledge there were some about the English Court who had engaged, when the time should serve, to persuade the King to part with it. So far from releasing the hold he had, on any pretence, Charles should insist, if ever he joined Louis in a war with Spain, on a promise that the French should seize Porto Longone in Elba, and hand it over to the English permanently. Then, said he, with Elba in his hands as well as Tangier, Charles would be as much master of the Mediterranean as he was of the Ocean.[1]

The seed appears to have fallen on good ground. At all events, Charles began to evince a sudden anxiety that in the plot he was hatching with Louis the Mediterranean should not be left entirely to his fellow conspirator. Under the new treaty operations were to begin with a joint declaration of war against the Dutch, and Charles in return for a French subsidy had undertaken to provide a fleet for co-operation with Louis's admirals in the Narrow

[1] R. Montagu to Arlington, Sept. 4, 1671, *Buccleuch MSS.* i. 500.

Seas. Now, however, about a month after Estrades' curious confidences, when all was settled, Montagu was instructed to broach to Louis a proposal for a further subsidy to enable another British fleet to be fitted out for service in the Mediterranean. In pursuance of these orders Montagu did his best to persuade Louis that, in view of the fact that the Spaniards would most likely join the Dutch as soon as war was declared, there was no quarter in which the English fleet could be of so much assistance to him as within the Straits. Every argument, good and bad, that could be dragged into the service was used to win Louis's consent. But to see the English strong in the Mediterranean was no part of the French King's game, and he met the request with a profession of his absolute inability to furnish another livre.[1]

Such then was the position of affairs in relation to the Mediterranean, when, without making any further concession to his fellow conspirator and dupe, Louis early in 1672 succeeded in thrusting Charles into a new war with the Dutch. Ill-advised as it was, there can be little doubt it was at first popular, and a real expression of the instinct of the nation. The great and rising mercantile community no less than the Court was still absorbed in the passion for commercial and imperial expansion, which is the dominant note of the Restoration. In spite of every effort to live at peace with them the Dutch had been showing by their behaviour that there was no room for them and the English side by side in any part of the world. If British commerce was to grow every one felt it must be rooted in domination of the Dutch.[2] Blinded by this pre-occupation, and burning for vengeance upon the burners of Chatham, public opinion welcomed the war with something like enthusiasm. But from the first there were far-sighted eyes that saw more acutely. Beneath Louis's cunning display of common interest they discerned a deep-laid plot to set by the ears the two powers who stood most formidably in the way of French ambitions. As the struggle proceeded this view quickly gained

[1] R. Montagu to Arlington, Dec. 15, 16, and 24, *Buccleuch MSS.* i. 507–9.
[2] Hertz, *English Public Opinion after the Restoration*, cap. iii.

adherents. The behaviour of the French fleet throughout the war again did everything that was possible to foster the belief in Louis's ulterior motives. The Comte d'Estrées, in command of the main fleet, attended actions as though they were manœuvres he had been sent to study. However loyally later French historians have sought to palliate the disgraceful part the French seamen were directed to play, it is certain that at the time it made a chivalrous people smart with shame.[1] They seemed to see their fleet on every occasion hold ingloriously aloof while their ally sapped her strength and enhanced her glory upon the common enemy.

It is only in this aspect that the war concerns us. Charles failed to shake Louis's refusal to assist him in fitting out a second fleet for the Straits, and consequently, during the two years the struggle lasted, it in no way affected the situation in the Mediterranean. Between them England and France were far too strong at sea for the Dutch to attempt anything serious to the southward. It is true that the refusal of the English proposal of a second fleet brought Colbert his nervous moments, when he was haunted by the spectre of De Ruyter detaching a squadron for a raid into the Mediterranean. At such times he would scold his officers who were destined to guard the Straits, and who would never get to sea, or, when they did, accomplished nothing. And so he would fall to mourning over the bad blood that prevailed among them, 'qui est,' as he sighed, 'l'esprit de l'ancienne marine.'[2] It was after the battle of Solebay in 1672 that he was most anxious, and there it was the action of the French fleet that had rendered a decisive victory impossible. The same prudent tactics were repeated the following year at the battle of the Texel, and so glaringly that the behaviour of the French was made a ground in the House of Commons for the refusing the supplies

[1] Jal in his *Du Quesne*, and Capt. Chevalier in Vol. i. of *Histoire de la Marine Française* (1902), both defend the action of the French in this war and the previous one, but it cannot be said that they make out an entirely convincing case against the strictures of Voltaire and the older historians.

[2] *Lettres de Colbert*, III. i. 481, 483, 485, 495.

which the Government asked for the continuance of the war. 'The last fight,' said Sir John Monson, 'was as if the English and Dutch had been gladiators for the French spectators.' His speech brought up the Secretary of State in reply, and it is worthy of note that he particularly urged the danger of losing Tangier if a fleet were not provided for the coming year.[1]

The growing importance of the place had already led to measures for providing it with a mobile defence of its own, and they are worth noting as the last attempt to reintroduce galleys into the British fleet. In a narrow strait, subject to calms and light airs, they had obvious advantages, and Henry Shere, a young engineer who afterwards superseded Cholmley, and about 1670 visited Leghorn and Genoa to study their methods of harbour work, says he first suggested their employment. 'My lord,' he wrote from Italy to some one in authority at home about this time, 'I remember to have discoursed to your excellency about galleys for the port of Tangier, and now advise your excellency that here hath lately arrived a French gentleman, by name Duteil, who is employed to the state of Genoa and the Grand Duke [of Tuscany] with ample credentials from his Majesty and his Royal Highness [the Duke of York], in order to the building and getting to sea of four or five galleys, two of which are already on the stocks in the arsenals of the aforesaid states. . . . I was glad of the news, very well assured that a couple of galleys being carefully employed would do the King good service in that part, but more than two would be burdensome and inconvenient.' He concludes by advising that an arsenal be immediately commenced at Tangier for their reception.[2] In August 1671 Cholmley had received orders to this effect, and sent home a plan of the port, showing how he proposed to berth the galleys and the modifications in the mole suggested for their

[1] *Parl. Hist.* 593: 'Debate on refusing a supply, October 31, 1672.'

[2] Shere to ——, *Tangier Papers, R.O.* 1670, bundle 13, undated, but he refers to his last letter, which was dated March 10, 1669–70. The mission of Sir John Baptist Duteil is mentioned in the summer of 1672, *Domestic Calendar*, July 25, p. 394.

protection.[1] During the war, however, the project seems to have hung fire. In the winter the work of making an inner harbour for them appears to have been commenced,[2] and early in 1672 there were several proposals made to the Government reviving the Elizabethan idea of sending prisoners convicted of small felonies to serve in the Tangier galleys.[3]

Two years elapsed, however, before the experiment could be tried, and then only one of the galleys, that from Leghorn, was ready. She was called the 'Margaret,' and the expense of arming her proved so great that, although the other was to be a present from Genoa to the King, her completion was left to stand over. The 'Margaret' was delivered at Tangier about the end of 1674, but during the two following seasons she appears to have done small, if any, service. Probably the type was too repugnant to the ideas of our seamen for her ever to have had much chance of proving a success. Rowers were a continual difficulty. The idea of condemning felons to the benches from home seems never to have been carried out, and efforts were made to man the oars with Barbary prisoners taken by the regular cruisers. The only result was that the galley fell further and further into discredit. In the summer of 1675 Duteil, who had been commanding her, was superseded by an English frigate captain, but all to no purpose, and in the following spring the 'Margaret' was discharged and returned to Leghorn. The Genoa galley was never even armed, and so the time-honoured craft disappeared from the British Navy List.[4] Contemporaneously with their short and ineffective reappearance a new type of oared vessel, designed after a French model and much more to the seamen's taste, had been worked out, and two of these were now to take the place of the obsolete craft.[5]

[1] Cholmley to the Tangier Council, Aug. 14, 1671, *Tangier Papers*, bundle 14, where the original plan is preserved.

[2] See plan, date February 3, 1671-2, in Davis, p. 140, compared with Cholmley's original sketch in the *Tangier Papers*.

[3] *Domestic Calendar, passim; Drake and the Tudor Navy*, i. 402.

[4] *Derrick*, p. 89. Luke to Shere, September 16, 1674 (*Add. MSS.* 19872). Tanner, *Pepys Calendar* 1674–6, *passim*.

[5] In 1683 George Byng, afterwards Lord Torrington, was appointed lieutenant of a 'half-galley' (*mezzo-galera*) attached to the Tangier garrison, but

'In the year '76,' says Pepys, 'Captain Wildshaw came from Toulon, and was telling his Majesty that there were building at Toulon several galley-frigates "to row with many oars," and thereupon, at the King's request, Sir Anthony Deane, the famous naval architect, wrote to procure particulars of them from an agent of his at Toulon. The answer being returned,' Pepys continues, 'A. D.'s son drew the draft of the "James" galley-frigate, and Mr. Pett the "Charles" upon the same principles, and from them came that improvement so useful to us against the Turks.'[1] The new vessels ranged from 450 to 500 tons, drew only twelve feet of water, and proved a great success. Shere called attention to their defect 'in not having some force of guns between decks,' and Pepys begged him to continue his observations on their usefulness, as the King proposed to lay down two more. Shere, who had recommended the galleys, was perhaps prejudiced against the new type, but their excellence is everywhere praised, and they became the prototype of a class of light vessel, using sweeps, that remained in the navy till recent times.[2] They were permanently attached to the Tangier station, and, together with the smaller oared craft, such as ketches, barca-longas, and the new class of sloop now first appearing in the fleet, provided all that was wanted of free movement for the policing of the Straits.[3]

this was certainly one of the new type. *Memoirs of Lord Torrington* (*Camden Soc.* 1889), p. 5.

[1] *Naval Minutes*, p 269, quoted by J. R. Tanner in *Eng. Hist. Rev.* xii. 699 *n*, 705. Wildshaw's suggestion must really have been made at the end of 1675. They were both in hand in February 1676, which accounts for the galleys being discharged at this time. Pett's vessel was launched by the Duke of York on September 12 the same year. On November 8 both were put into commission. Each was to have 80 'watermen' in her complement to row, and each was to have a special 'second boatswain' for 'the better exercising, instructing, and commanding the gangs of men appointed to the oars.' Tanner, *Pepys Calendar*, 2796, 3194, 3423, 3556, 3563–6, 3575, *et passim*.

[2] Pepys to Shere, September 16, 1677 (*Add. MSS.* 19872), and *A Discourse touching Tangier* (dated October 1679), *Harleian Misc.* viii. 397.

[3] The word 'sloop' had become by this time familiar in the navy, the older 'shallop' and pinnace disappearing. In 1677 an officer of the 'Woolwich' in Narbrough's fleet speaks of the 'Boneta,' 'Emsworth,' and 'Woolwich' sloops (see log of the 'Woolwich' and 'Defiance,' 1672–8, *Harl. MSS.* 1910, f. 23), also of the 'Chatham' double sloop, and the 'Sprag' double

The attention that was being bestowed on the defence of Tangier is not surprising; for by this time it was beginning to have a real value as a port of refuge and a naval base. By the end of the year 1673 the mole was completed to a length of nearly 450 yards, and in 1675 Shere estimated that, if he were allowed to take over the works and carry them on upon the principles he had studied in Italy, he could finish the whole undertaking in a little over four years, and for less than a hundred thousand pounds.[1] A man of high scientific attainments, he was a convinced enthusiast for the place, and was to spend his best work and most strenuous years in making it what he knew it might be. It was about this time that he wrote a treatise on the tides, currents, and climate of the Mediterranean, and in the course of it his opinion of the place forces itself out. 'And here,' he exclaims, in mentioning Tangier, 'were it not a fitter subject for a treatise than a digression, I might say my opinion touching this noble port of Tangier, which in a word is a jewel fit only to adorn the crown that wears it, whose value I can better conceive than write, and humbly refer to a more worthy pen or to a truer and more impartial relater. Time for a few years, in despite of all the obloquy cast upon it by the enemies of his Majesty's honour and dominion abroad, will suffice to polish it to much perfection of use and public service both for peace and war, as would be very hard for a stranger to believe, and scarce fit for a modest pen to write.'[2]

sloop, a fire-ship (ff. 24, and under May 4, 1678). The 'Young Sprag' had been a sixth-rate, and in 1677 was made a fire-ship (Tanner, *Eng. Hist. Rev.* xii. 55 *n*). No more double sloops appear to have been built. They were probably superseded by the galley-frigates. On January 24, 1678, Narbrough writes of his intending to attack Algiers with his 'slops' and fire-ships, *Add. MSS.* 19872.

[1] The survey of 1673 certifies 437 yards finished, besides 40 of foundation (Davis, p. 140). For Shere's estimate see Pepys to him, October 9, 1675 (*Add. MSS.* 19872), in which Pepys points out an error in his figures.

[2] *A Discourse concerning the Mediterranean Sea and the Streights of Gibraltar*, by Sir Henry Shere, p. 20. It was first printed in 1703, just before Rooke took Gibraltar, and again just after in 1705. It was written, however, long before. On p. 30 Shere says he has been in Tangier four years. He left England for the place in May 1669. (See *Dict. Nat. Biog. sub voce* 'Sheeres.') Internal evidence shows that it was written while he

He certainly had some grounds for his enthusiasm, for, besides being able to give shelter to merchantmen during the war, it enabled war ships to use it as a station for watching the Straits. Had this not been so, the Dutch, who were in close alliance with Spain, and whose cruisers and convoys were using Cadiz as if it were a port of their own, would have had an insuperable advantage against our trade. The last action of the war well illustrates the situation. Peace was signed at Westminster on February 9, 1674. A week later Captain Passchier de Witte in the 'Shackerloo' of 28 guns, who was cruising off the Straits mouth, retired into Cadiz. An hour or so later he was followed in by Captain Harman from Tangier with the 'Tiger' of 46 guns, who began to tell every one he had chased the Dutchman in. De Witte protested he had never even seen the English ship, but Harman continued to boast he had run from him. Admiral Cornelis Evertsen was in the port at the time careening, and was at length so much infuriated with the English captain's behaviour that he told De Witte that for the honour of the flag it was his duty to fight him. The Quixotic challenge was given and accepted. With such disparity of force the result could hardly be doubtful. In two hours, after an heroic duel at close quarters, the 'Shackerloo' was forced to strike with the loss of 50 killed and 70 wounded, including De Witte himself. Harman was also wounded, but the English loss was only 24 all told—an indication no less of the superior gunnery of the English than of the determined resistance of the Dutch.[1]

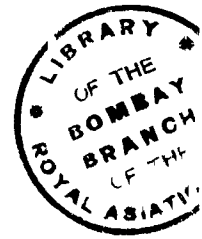
If Louis had hoped that the war would shake the English hold on the Straits he was disappointed. It had indeed rather the contrary effect. For it drove Mediterranean merchants, and French ones in particular, to use Tangier more than ever, and thus served to give the

was at home, and we know he was in England again in 1674 and 1675, just before he took over the work at Tangier. See letter addressed to him at Whitehall in September 1674, and Pepys to him in October 1675, *Add. MSS.* 19872. He sailed for Tangier at the end of May 1676. Tanner, *Pepys Calendar*, 2904, 2912, 2925.

[1] De Jonghe, *Nederlandsche Zeewezen*, III. i. 361.

place a prosperity it had never enjoyed before. 'Tangier,' says a newsletter of the time, 'is likely to prove the richest port in those parts. During the war it has been the harbour for all European commodities and may long continue so.'[1] Still the inglorious policy which Louis had been pursuing at sea had left him the richer too, and in possession of a fleet with which he could seek compensation so soon as an occasion offered. He had not long to wait. Within a few months after the peace was signed an opening presented itself, and by the end of the year France was once more launched upon a course which threatened to change the whole condition of Mediterranean power.

[1] *Le Fleming MSS.* 112, and see Luke to Shere, September 1674, *Add. MSS.* 19872, f. 9.



CHAPTER XXIII

LOUIS XIV. AND SICILY

THE significance of the new movement lay in the fact that the European situation had by this time definitely assumed the aspect which we associate with the age of Louis XIV. The Triple Alliance, which Temple had negotiated, had failed to check the career of France, as it was doomed to fail, seeing that contemporaneously with it Charles was arranging his secret understanding with the French King behind his Ambassador's back. By the astounding treaty of Dover, which he had concluded under the influence of his idolised sister, Henriette d'Orléans, he had practically placed his foreign policy in Louis's keeping. In return for aiding him to establish a Catholic despotism in England, Louis was to have a free hand and even assistance in his imperial and counter-Reformation policy. So secret was the incredible project kept that for generations afterwards historians were baffled in seeking a key to Charles's bewildering policy. By the nation it was felt rather than understood—felt like some ghostly terror which could not be defined or grappled, but still was there, haunting its rest and scaring its resistance into insensate panic. The first manifestation of the great design, as we have seen, was Charles's joining Louis in the late war upon Holland, and the first uneasy movement of the nation compelled him to desert his Catholic ally. The instinct of the people began to show them the war was a blow at Protestantism. The old feeling rose paramount to all other considerations. The insult which the Dutch had put upon the country at Chatham was forgotten, the injuries in the East were atoned, and peace was the result.

Abroad the danger was no less keenly felt. Everywhere the unholy league was regarded as a new step towards the domination of France, and when Charles was forced to withdraw his support, Louis found himself faced with a new Triple Alliance. The French peril had galvanised into life the old Hapsburg system, but with new relations. For the Hapsburgs the preservation of Holland was now as vital as it had formerly been to France, and thus the new Triple Alliance was formed of Holland, Spain, and the Empire. With the domination of France taking the place of the old threat of the domination of Spain, the array of the nations had changed, but the strategical factors were the same. The vital points lay still in the old centres—the military in the Low Countries, the naval in the Mediterranean. As the first alliance had been mainly naval, so the new one was mainly military. The Low Countries were therefore the more absorbing factor, but the Mediterranean could not be for a moment forgotten. Here lay the main source of French wealth, and it was here, according to the side upon which the balance of sea power fell, lay the link or the barrier between the two Hapsburg powers. Here too was the channel by which England could strike into the heart of the strife with an overpowering hand. Never had its meaning to the power of the island realm been more patent. As the sides stood ranged, the chances were fairly balanced. It is true France was single-handed. But Louvois had completed his reorganisation of the army; Colbert had done no less for finance and the navy; and the policy which Louis had pursued in the two Dutch wars, while it had shattered the sea power of Holland, had left France with a fleet intact and yet trained to war. The fate of Europe seemed to hang on the part which England would play. The country was for joining the alliance, the Court for joining France, and Louis knew that, in the excited state of popular opinion, all he could hope for was neutrality.

For him it had a double importance. On shore he could rely with confidence on the unprecedented army he now possessed. It was in the Mediterranean his

chief anxiety lay, and England held its gate. Already he had ordered all his available vessels to concentrate from Brest and Toulon at the Straits, with the intention of barring the entry of the Dutch and, if possible, of crushing the Spanish sea power before she could unite with her new ally. The trouble was that he had no base from which his fleet could act against Cadiz, the naval centre of the maritime alliance; and the first step he took, when England broke away from his toils, was to endeavour to remedy the evil by one of his most characteristic moves. With the alert appreciation of public opinion in England, which he was to use thereafter with so much dexterity, he promptly withdrew his Catholic Ambassador and replaced him with a Huguenot nobleman, that the request he had to make might arouse as little suspicion as possible. It was the neutrality of England which the new Ambassador had to secure, and something more. His special instructions were to press for orders to the governors of all British ports that they were not only to admit French war ships, but to assist them with all they might require.[1]

From what followed it is clear enough which port it was that Louis had particularly in his mind. The focus of his naval action lay in the concentration of his Toulon and Brest squadrons at the Straits. The united fleet was to be under the Duc de Vivonne, who, as Captain-General of the Galleys of France, was then the highest naval officer in the service. For his flag-officers he was to have no less men than Valbelle and Du Quesne. The concentration was carried out with unusual precision in the early summer of 1674, and at the first trouble from bad weather the whole fleet came to anchor at Tangier. The advantage of Louis's action in London, where his Ambassador had obtained his request, was at once apparent. It was found that no Dutch squadron strong enough to force the Straits was expected for the present, and at Tangier, therefore, Vivonne could lie in security while he leisurely proceeded to work out a design for the destruction of his enemy's shipping in Cadiz.[2] As it happened,

[1] Jal, *Du Quesne*, i. 135. [2] *Ibid.* i. 133.

nothing came of it. For it was while Vivonne was thus preparing to act from Tangier that an event occurred which pointed to a much more profitable employment for the French fleet. All thought of Cadiz was given up, and the maritime war swung back into the time-honoured grooves from which it seems almost impossible for a struggle for the command of the Mediterranean to escape.

In Sicily, during the absence of the Spanish Viceroy, Messina had suddenly risen upon her Governor, and, having driven him from the city, the insurgents had sent to Vivonne an entreaty that he would come to their aid. The stirring summons reached him at a moment when his officers were doing their best to frighten him out of his projected attack on Cadiz, and he readily seized the occasion to abandon so thorny an enterprise and to return to Toulon for orders. The importance of the event certainly justified his action. No more enticing opportunity could have occurred for redressing the defects of the French strategical position. Still in the memory of how France had burnt her fingers in the similar attempts of the Duke of Guise, and in view of the preoccupation of the southern French army with an invasion of Catalonia, Louis could not bring himself to take drastic action at once. Nevertheless, the situation was too full of enticing possibilities not to be kept open, and Valbelle was permitted to carry a small squadron with arms and stores for the relief of the besieged insurgents. No sooner was he arrived than they assaulted him with impassioned appeals for annexation to France. It was more than the admiral dare promise. He could only assure them vaguely of his master's protection. But, his mission accomplished, he hurried back to Toulon, convinced of the enormous importance of the opportunity, and determined to persuade the Government to his views.

The half-hearted intervention had already had a pronounced effect. In view of French operations in Catalonia, the bulk of the Spanish naval forces, including most of the Armada of the Ocean, was assembled within the Straits at Barcelona; but, on hearing of Louis's move-

ment, the whole force had sailed for Messina, and it was only by taking advantage of a moment when the weather compelled it to leave the port open that Valbelle had been able to break out of the beleaguered port. He had thus had to leave the insurgent city closely pressed by sea and land, and if, therefore, anything effective was to be done, it must be done quickly. The strategical advantage already gained was obvious enough to harden Louis's heart for a more serious attempt to gain possession of the island. As a preliminary step Valbelle was allowed to return in December with fresh relief, and he carried with him a distinguished French general as Commander-in-Chief for the insurgents, and a number of officers to organise their forces. By dexterous manœuvres he was again able to take advantage of unfavourable weather to run the blockade, and a fresh hold had been taken.

Meanwhile Louis had gone so far as to create M. de Vivonne Viceroy of Sicily, and had furnished him with a force which made the appointment something more than a threat. With Du Quesne as his second in command he arrived off Messina on February 1, 1675, and with the assistance of Valbelle's squadron succeeded in a sharp action in forcing the blockade and compelling the Spanish fleet to retire to Naples for repairs. Messina, which had at that time over a hundred thousand inhabitants, and had been on the point of succumbing to starvation, was saved, and the central point of the Mediterranean was effectively a French possession. Nor was this all. So completely was the Spanish fleet reduced to impotence for the time that the French squadrons were able to pass between Toulon and Messina without hindrance, and in the course of the spring Vivonne, who had taken the command ashore, had received sufficient reinforcements to enable him to assume the offensive and begin the conquest of the island by a move towards Palermo.

It was a situation which the sea powers were not likely to regard with indifference. About midsummer the elaborate preparations which the Spanish admiral was making in Naples began to have a new significance when it was known that Spain, under the terms of the Triple

Alliance, had applied to the Dutch for assistance, and that De Ruyter himself was under orders to proceed to Sicily with a squadron of twenty sail. About England Louis was scarcely less nervous. In the autumn of 1674 Sir John Narbrough, a flag-officer who had made a considerable reputation in the late war, had been appointed Commander-in-Chief in the Mediterranean, and was now maintaining an effective blockade of Tripoli in ominous proximity to the storm centre. In view of the condition of affairs in England it was impossible to tell how far or how long the chastisement of the corsairs would remain Narbrough's real object. Charles, who was cynically oscillating between dependence on Louis and a frank national policy, might any day come to terms with his warlike Parliament and fix their devotion by throwing in his lot with the allies; and since England during the past century had established a sinister reputation of always commencing hostilities without a declaration of war, Louis might find the balance in the Mediterranean turned against him at any moment. By the middle of September De Ruyter was in Cadiz concerting operations with the Spaniards and preparing for an effective junction with their squadron in Naples so soon as it should be ready for sea. Vivonne had failed in his offensive movement ashore, and Du Quesne, who was in Toulon trying to get to sea with a fresh fleet for his relief, was in imminent danger of never being able to reach Messina. The tension of the situation was acute; nor was it relieved till Louis found himself compelled to induce Charles to prorogue his aggressive Parliament with the promise of a pension of half a million a year.

At this cost Louis was able to reduce the balance to equality. But De Ruyter was already at Melazzo, where Vivonne's advance towards Palermo had been checked. Du Quesne was still in Toulon. The operations that ensued mark the definite establishment of France as a first-rate naval power. The bulk of the Spanish ships with which De Ruyter was to co-operate were in Palermo, not yet ready for sea. In Messina was a French squadron of eight of the line and several frigates, under orders to

endeavour to join hands with Du Quesne as soon as he appeared. This squadron De Ruyter immediately resolved to attack and destroy in detail before the Toulon squadron came on the field. Having seen Melazzo safe, therefore, he weighed to enter the Straits without waiting for his Spanish colleague. As luck would have it, however, the wind went into the south-east, and he found it impossible to get in. For two days he stood off and on between the mouth of the Straits and the Lipari islands, waiting for a shift of weather. Seeing that De Ruyter's object was to prevent a junction between the two French squadrons, these islands were the key of the situation; for, lying as they did in the direct course from Toulon, they gave every opportunity for evasion to a squadron from that port seeking to get touch with Messina. On the third day he received intelligence that a French fleet had been sighted from Alicudi, the most westerly of the islands. The news pointed to an intention of Du Quesne to reach Messina by passing between Melazzo and Vulcano, the southernmost of the islands, and De Ruyter promptly occupied the channel. Here, on the fifth day, he was joined by the Spanish galleys that were lying at Melazzo, but a stiff south-wester came on, and they had to go back. De Ruyter held his ground. He was still hoping to get into the Straits, but towards evening he saw on the heights of Lipari the fiery signal that a fleet was in sight, and, as the wind still held at south-west, he resolved to deal with the new-comers first. Next day saw him among the islands, between Stromboli and Lipari, where he heard from fishermen that a fleet was in sight from Salina. Officers were quickly landed to climb the heights of that island, and towards evening they returned with the report that they had seen thirty sail some six leagues to the north-west standing towards them. Steering northward all night, De Ruyter at break of day sighted the enemy some three leagues ahead and to leeward of him, standing west-north-west almost athwart his course. He immediately crowded all sail in general chase, and about noon, as the French continued to hug the wind in a determined effort to weather him,

his ten leading ships were within range. But instead of holding on he suddenly hauled his wind, and, standing with the French out of gunshot, made the signal for line of battle.

To the French it seemed he was declining an action. Conduct so contrary to the usual impetuosity of the old fire-eating admiral has been misunderstood by others besides the astonished French. The highest modern authority has endeavoured to account for De Ruyter's action on the supposition that, finding himself in inferior force, he did decline the action, but with the deliberate intention of giving the enemy the wind, so as to compel him to attack to leeward, and that he thus inaugurated the defensive tactics which the French so long used with success against the British admirals of the eighteenth century.[1]

In face, however, of De Ruyter's own despatch, this view is not tenable. It is true his information led him to believe that Du Quesne's fleet was more numerous than his own, but it is clear he did not yet realise how much stronger it was. There was nothing to show that the bulk of the enemy were not store ships and transports, and his own galleys were now close at hand at Lipari. His movement was solely made in order to keep the wind and to allow his rearmost ships to get into battle order. So far, however, had they fallen to leeward that it was three o'clock before the line was formed. At seven it would be dark, and he saw that in those confined waters it was too late in the day to win a decisive victory. The action must be fought on the morrow, and, calling his captains aboard him, he exhorted them to fight to the death. Each officer grasped the old hero's hand and passed his word, and then all night long he hung upon the enemy with the galleys in company. The two fleets were sailing close-hauled on the same tack to the south-westward. Half-way between them De Ruyter had a galley to keep contact and signal him if the enemy attempted to elude him by a change of course. But as the night advanced the wind grew unsteady with ugly squalls.

[1] Mahan, *Influence of Sea Power on History.*

Later it increased to half a gale, and the contact scout with all the rest of the galleys had to run for Lipari for shelter. Now was Du Quesne's chance, and sure enough through the roar of the gale De Ruyter soon heard his signal to tack. He immediately did the same and the French move was parried. No man ever worked harder or better to keep the advantage of the wind. Du Quesne, under a press of sail, was using all his art to outmanœuvre his antagonist, but against the first master of his craft his efforts were useless. Chance at last gave him what he could not win. Towards dawn the wind again chopped round, and when day broke on December 27 De Ruyter saw the French fleet about four leagues from him and well to windward. The fickle weather had lost him the game, and, worse still, daylight showed him that the French fleet was composed mainly of war ships bigger than his own. Then, and not till then, he knew he was in serious inferiority both in numbers and force. Still the hard-bitten veteran would not give way, and, seeing the weather gage hopelessly gone, he bore up till he was in such a position that the enemy could not reach Messina without fighting him, and there awaited Du Quesne's attack.[1]

What followed is described by De Ruyter in words that leave no doubt as to the intention of his tactics.

[1] See Brandt's *Michel de Ruiter*, and De Jonge's *Geschiedenis van het Nederlandsche Zeewezen*. Both authors used De Ruyter's despatch written on Jan. 9, 1676 (n.s.), the day after the action. Though Jal (*Du Quesne*, ii. 203) gives part of this despatch, he omits the earlier and more interesting portion, and somewhat mistranslates other parts. Captain Mahan, not having access to these two excellent Dutch works, or to the later French ones, was unfortunately induced in his great work to rely too much on the French 'official' naval history of Lapeyrouse, which a brother naval historian, himself by no means an impeccable scholar, has called 'une malheureuse compilation, due à un ex-officier de marine, M. Bonfils la Blénie ou Laperouse, sous le titre trompeur d'histoire de la marine ; car il n'y a pas trace d'histoire sérieuse dans cet ouvrage dont le ministère de la marine, à défaut du public, s'est fait l'acquéreur, et dont il a empoisonné les bibliothèques des ports et bâtiments de l'état, pour enseigner aux marins sans doute le contrepied du bon sens et de la vérité' (Guérin, *Histoire Maritime de la France*, iii. 495). Of Guérin's work another French critic writes: 'Cette œuvre de seconde main est au milieu de nos bons livres d'histoires d'aujourd'hui ce qu'est le vulgaire oison dont parle Virgile au milieu des cygnes harmonieux.' See De la Roncière, i. 27, *note* (6).

'At daybreak on the 8th,' he wrote in his official despatch, 'we saw them again edging past us, and, the wind being six points against us, they had the weather gage. So that, instead of our chasing them and their wishing to avoid an action, as we had supposed, they bore down on us about nine o'clock in the morning.'[1] The action was fought somewhere between Filicudi and Stromboli. For three hours or more it raged, as was admitted on all sides, with unexampled fury. A calm put a stop to it, and by the help of his galleys De Ruyter was able to withdraw his fleet from an enveloping movement which, in accordance with the latest tactical ideas, Du Quesne says he was about to make.[2]

Both sides claimed the victory. Neither sought to renew the action. The technical advantage was certainly with De Ruyter. With an inferior force he had held his ground, and prevented Du Quesne's getting through to Messina. On the following day he was joined by the Spanish admiral, and together they devoted themselves to trying to draw Du Quesne to the westward away from the Straits. He held, however, resolutely to Stromboli and refused to move till the Messina squadron slipped out and joined him. The allies were now in an inferiority of two to one, and, after again trying to induce Du Quesne to chase to the westward, De Ruyter decided to return to Melazzo. So long as he kept his fleet there intact within striking distance of Messina he knew Du Quesne dared not enter the straits for fear of exposing his rearguard to destruction. The move was a complete success. Du Quesne, even though he had succeeded in effecting the junction, was beaten. For all his superiority he had left the allied fleet in being, and was compelled to attempt the relief of Messina south-about. So hard pressed was the garrison, and so uncertain the wintry weather, that this in itself constituted a victory for the Dutch. The chances were that Du Quesne could not arrive in time to save Messina, and as soon as the French move was known De Ruyter retired into port to refit. The time for which his services had been engaged was expiring, and in

[1] Jal, ii. 203.

[2] See *post*, p. 528.

pursuance of his original orders he prepared to go home, content that he had done for the Spaniards fully as much as their unreadiness deserved.

With the small force at his command he had certainly added new laurels to his great reputation. Still, after all, the lasting advantage was with the French. Against all expectation, lucky shifts of wind enabled Du Quesne to reach Messina in time to save the situation. Nor was this all, or nearly all. After years of blundering and pusillanimous failure the French navy came out of the action with an established reputation. Not only had Du Quesne crossed swords with the most renowned seaman of his time and suffered no defeat, but by the generous admission of their opponents the French had handled their fleet with consummate skill and in admirable order.[1] It was clear to all men that Louis's navy had begun to be something that it had never been before. Thanks to Colbert's efforts and the cheap experience it had won by pretending to co-operate first with the Dutch and then with the English in the late wars, it had reached a degree of discipline and tactical efficiency little if anything inferior to that of its masters; and from the hard-fought battle off Stromboli dates the commencement of the time when France could feel real confidence in her naval forces.

Nor did the remainder of the war belie the first experience. Towards the end of February De Ruyter, having received at Leghorn despatches authorising him to continue the campaign, moved to Palermo, where he concerted with the Spaniards a combined attack on Messina by sea and land in hopes of destroying Du Quesne where he lay. The attempt took place at the end of March. De Ruyter succeeded in carrying the fleet into the Straits, but once before Messina he saw that the currents made an attack impossible. At the same time the Spanish troops were defeated in their assault, and the fleet went southward to Reggio, hoping to draw Du Quesne into the open.[2] The French did not refuse the challenge,

[1] See De Ruyter's despatch in Jal, ii. 203, and cf. Brandt and De Jonge, *ubi supra*.

[2] Brandt, *Michel de Ruiter*, book xviii.

and before long the two fleets met again off Augusta, a little town that lies between Syracuse and Ætna. The Spanish contingent, wholly inexperienced in the new tactics, proved themselves incapable of acting in unison with the smart manœuvres of the Dutch. Another indecisive action ensued, which was terminated by nightfall. Again the French more than held their own against the combined Dutch and Spanish fleet, and, to add to their sense of victory, the veteran De Ruyter, who from the first had felt he was going to his doom, was mortally wounded. Verschoen, his vice-admiral, had been killed at Stromboli, and De Haën, the original rear-admiral, succeeded to the command. He at once withdrew the allied fleet to Palermo. Here the exultant French a month later resolved to deal the allies a final blow. Vivonne himself took command, and De Haën, disgusted at the hopeless blundering and inefficiency of the Spanish captains with whom he was condemned to act, resolved to abide the attack at anchor. By skilful tactics, which added still further to their prestige, the French succeeded in concentrating their attack on a portion of the enemy's line, and by a timely use of their fire-ships to inflict so crushing a blow as practically to remove the hostile fleet from the board. Twelve ships were completely destroyed, many more disabled, and De Haën, with two of his flag officers, was killed.

Having thus within six months fought three successful actions against two of the great sea powers, the reputation of the French navy was firmly established, and their position in the Mediterranean secured. Du Quesne could safely retire to Toulon for stores and reinforcements, and in the middle of July was able to sail again with three thousand infantry to reinforce the French Viceroy. There was nothing to intercept him. In vain the Spaniards urged the Dutch to make one more effort. The admiral said he had instructions from home to go to Naples to await further orders, and Du Quesne and the rest of the army that was following him passed unmolested. The fact was the Dutch were disgusted with the futility of their ally, and in August, when the second period for

which they had promised to serve in the Mediterranean was expired, the fleet was recalled. France was at last in command of the sea, at liberty to throw in what force she chose to complete the reduction of Sicily. As things stood it was but a question of time. With a real army at his back Vivonne began to reach out towards Syracuse, and by the autumn Taormina, the romantic spot from which the Greeks two thousand years before had begun their Sicilian dominion, was in his possession. Single-handed it was hopeless for Spain to expect that she could prolong the situation indefinitely. By pursuing those evasive tactics in which, since the days of Drake, she had always shown so high a skill, she was still able to support her hard-pressed officers. Yet, unless something intervened to relieve the tension, it was inevitable that France would soon be in possession of the heart of the Mediterranean.

But already the heat of her success, both here and elsewhere, was drawing out of the North the cloud that was destined at last to chill and wither the system of the Grand Monarque. His evil genius had arisen. Since the murder of De Witt the monarchical constitution had been restored to the Netherlands, and William of Orange, as Stadtholder of the States, had become the focus of resistance to Louis. At present his prospects were dark enough. The land campaign in Flanders was going far from well; and on that side the relations between the Dutch and the Spaniards were growing as bad and mistrustful as they were in the Mediterranean. In his trouble William turned to Charles, and while Vivonne was in the act of again setting out for a grand attack on Syracuse, Bentinck, the Prince's most confidential follower, came over to feel the ground for a match between the houses of Stuart and Orange. The attack on Syracuse proved abortive. Bentinck's mission was in every way a success. Vivonne's whole campaign fell to pieces, and while Louis was chafing at his Viceroy's failure, William was at Newmarket approving the attractions of Princess Mary, the eldest daughter of the Duke of York. At the same time, Sir John Narbrough, who had gone home after successfully completing his work at

Tripoli, reappeared in the Mediterranean with a fresh fleet, and Louis began to take serious alarm, as well he might.

During the last inglorious years the British navy, the one factor in the situation which, if thrown into the scale against him, Louis could not hope to resist, had well maintained its prestige, and above all in the Mediterranean, where most it was to be feared. It was Narbrough, moreover, who had most brilliantly kept the old fire burning. The blockade of Tripoli, which he had established and maintained throughout the year 1675, had proved a complete success. A number of the corsairs' vessels were captured or destroyed by his cruisers and boats, and in January 1676 he had made a bold attempt on four vessels that lay in the harbour itself. The flotilla by which the attack was made was led by a young lieutenant named Cloudesley Shovell, afterwards the famous admiral, and without the loss of a man all four vessels were destroyed. Subsequently Narbrough landed a party and succeeded in burning a quantity of naval stores, but in spite of the lesson the Dey remained obdurate. He had still four powerful vessels at sea, but these Narbrough soon fell in with. Besides his own ship, the 'Hampshire,' he had only one frigate with him, but he did not hesitate to engage. A bloody action ensued, in which, though he did not capture one of the enemy, he forced them to fly into Tripoli, cut to pieces, and with the loss of six hundred men. With his navy practically annihilated, the Dey at last came to reason. On March 5, 1676, a treaty was signed, conceding to England the maritime privileges she demanded, and agreeing to an indemnity of eighty thousand dollars. So abject a submission produced a revolution. The Dey was expelled from the city, and the new Government defied the admiral. Thereupon he once more stood in to threaten a bombardment, and the new Dey found himself compelled to ratify the objectionable treaty. Fresh from this success, Narbrough returned to Tangier, and his mere presence there was enough to coerce Salee into a treaty similar to that which he had exacted from Tripoli

Louis himself was able to cut a scarcely more dignified figure than the corsairs. His protests that the English were practically protecting Dutch commerce against his privateers instead of assisting him to destroy it only resulted in his having to agree to a commercial treaty, whereby he gave up his belligerent rights and exempted British vessels from molestation by his cruisers, whether they were carrying enemy's goods or not.[1] But even this humiliating concession brought him little rest from his main anxiety. Though the ostensible object of Narbrough's return to the Mediterranean after his exploits at Tripoli was merely that some Algerine cruisers had captured one or two English merchantmen, the fleet he was to command was to consist of nearly thirty sail; 'but what is most extraordinary,' as a newsman wrote, 'is that the Duke of Monmouth goes to sea with this fleet in quality only of captain of the "Resolution," a ship of between sixty and seventy guns.'[2] Eventually the young Protestant hero did not sail, but the fact that he thought of doing so remains as evidence of the importance attached to the fleet in Court circles and the menace it contained for Louis.

A further point is not without significance and of high interest as showing the germ of an idea on which the British Mediterranean power came ultimately to be largely based. In the spring of 1675 Pepys had written to Narbrough instructing him to arrange a base to which reinforcements might be sent for a more vigorous prosecution of the war with Tripoli. Since Leghorn was too distant and too ill-disposed and Messina blockaded, the King and the Lords, he was told, considered Malta fittest for the purpose. Kephallonia had also been suggested, but the final decision was to be left to the admiral. Narbrough had no hesitation. He chose Malta, and seeing that he was operating against the nearest and most formidable enemy of the Knights, he had no difficulty in securing their permission. As soon as this was known at the Admiralty, the Tangier careening hulk and all the stores

[1] *Lettres de Colbert*, III. i. No. 440, Sept. 7–17, 1676. Ranke, iv. 26.
[2] *Le Fleming MSS.* (*Hist. MSS. Com.*), xii. vii. 129, 149.

that were going out to Narbrough were ordered to Malta. In June 1675 Pepys, in submitting a memorandum of the Navy Estimates to Parliament, asked for a grant 'for the providing of stores to be lodged at Malta for answering the wants of the fleet under Sir John Narbrough,' and a month later a frigate sailed from Spithead to convoy the Tangier hulk to the new base.[1] The arrangement probably terminated with Narbrough's successful conclusion of the war, but as he expended his indemnity on the spot in ransoming captives, amongst whom were several Knights of Malta, he was clearly in a position to prolong or renew his advantage as he pleased.

Besides the indication of the intended field of Narbrough's operations which these proceedings afforded, there lay in them a still higher menace. In view of the alarming growth of the French fleet, the House of Commons had passed a resolution to take into consideration the whole state of the navy, and called upon the Admiralty for a return. In presenting it, Pepys, to enforce his argument for an increase of strength, produced one of those comparative tables—now so familiar—which showed the French fleet actually superior to our own. 'Our neighbours' force,' said he, 'is now greater than ours, and they will still be building, so that we are as well to overtake them for the time past as to keep pace with them in the present building.' Not only had they passed us in numbers, but also in the individual power of their ships. In strength, staunchness, and general sea endurance, their recent construction had gone beyond us. He therefore urged the immediate laying down of a number of the larger rates; and recommended our 'building ships more burdensome, stronger, and giving them more breadth.' This would 'make them carry their guns better—that is higher—our great ships failing therein, especially in bad weather;' 'enable them to carry more timber and thicker sides, less easily penetrated by shot;' give more stowage room,

[1] See *Pepys Calendar*, 1675; Pepys to Narbrough, April 19, May 10, June 14; same to the Speaker, June 19, July 6; same to Bett, July 6 (ordering the 'Europa' hulk from Tangier to Malta); and same to Narbrough, September 3.

and fit them for the heavier guns that were coming into favour. In the end the House voted a large grant for the construction of thirty new ships, and though conditions were attached to it which Charles could not agree to, the programme was soon after taken in hand.[1]

It mattered little therefore that when, towards the end of 1677, Narbrough reappeared in the Straits, the misconduct of the Algerines afforded an excuse for his presence. Behind him was a strenuous naval revival, directed to a declared end, and he carried in his hand a threat there was no concealing. His arrival was followed by a report that Cornelis Evertsen was coming down to join him with eighteen sail, and Louis saw he must take rapid and decisive action.[2] Vivonne, since his late failures, had been showing as little heart as ability for his position, and it was now decided to allow him to return to his naval command at Toulon, and to replace him with one of the most accomplished soldiers in France. It was Marshal d'Aubusson, Duc de la Feuillade, on whom Louis's choice fell, and in the last months of 1677 an expedition was prepared for him, strong enough to carry French arms from end to end of Sicily. At the same time Charles, having decided to offer his mediation, was pressing Louis to make a reasonable peace with Spain. But, so far from listening, the French King continued to extend his operations in Flanders, and on New Year's Day, 1678, Charles and the Prince of Orange signed a treaty to unite their forces in compelling France to end the war. Clearly there was no time to lose; Feuillade had already left Paris, and was riding night and day down to Toulon to take up his command. By January 14, 1678, he was clear away to sea, and by the end of the month carried his fleet into the Straits of Messina. On February 3 he took the oath as Viceroy, and proceeded at once to strengthen the French advanced posts for immediate offensive action. For about a month his preparations continued, and when they were complete he invited the leading citizens to a banquet. In their enthusiasm they brought with them

[1] Tanner, *Engl. Hist. Rev.* xii. 691 *et seq*

[2] *Lettres de Colbert*, III. i. No. 470, November 7–17, 1677.

the sacred banner of Sta. Maria della Lettera, which had never been placed in a general's hands since, a century before, it was given to Don John of Austria on the eve of Lepanto. For a power that was about to take the place which Spain had then held the honour was appropriate enough, and Feuillade accepted it complacently. After the ceremony he begged them to adjourn to the Senate House that he might publicly announce his master's orders. To the surprise of the citizens they heard that these orders were for every French soldier to be immediately withdrawn from Sicily. The King, so the Marshal said, required them for a secret expedition, and he hoped to be back in two months with still larger forces. The Messinians had no suspicion of the word of the general passed under their sacred banner, and Feuillade was allowed to proceed without interruption.

So the unhappy insurgents were left to their fate. It was this that had been intended by Feuillade's appointment. The decisive step which Louis had felt himself compelled to take was not the conquest of Sicily but its evacuation, and once more by a threat of action in the Mediterranean the Northern powers had laid a mastering hand upon the European situation. In France, so far from there being any hope of retaining a hold upon Sicily, the fear was that they would not even be permitted to abandon it. Narbrough was on the spot, and there was no telling what his orders were. 'We ought, I think,' wrote Du Quesne, 'to assume that, if the English declare themselves, it will be as they habitually do, by firing the shot at their own time, just as they did when they declared against the Dutch in 1672 by Holmes attacking the Smyrna convoy.' He might, as we know, have added many other instances, which gave to a British fleet ready for action in the Mediterranean its peculiar weight in the councils of Europe. The English, however, did not declare themselves. The threat was enough, and the French garrison returned direct to Toulon unmolested.

On his northern frontier Louis was not so easily checked. Though a peace congress was sitting at Nymwegen, to Englishmen it seemed that, if the Spanish Nether-

lands were to be saved, war was inevitable. The Duke of Monmouth went over to the Low Countries with an English force ready to co-operate with William of Orange. In July an engagement actually occurred between the opposing forces at Mons; and at sea conflicts between French and English vessels from time to time intensified the situation. Preparations, moreover, were being made in the British ports for fitting out a fleet of ninety sail. It was the last year of Pepys's able administration, and the navy had never been more ready for war. Eighty-three vessels were actually in commission, the magazines were packed with reserve stores, the ships in harbour were in excellent condition, and thirty new ones of the first three rates were upon the stocks.[1] Here lay the greatest anxiety for France; and throughout the summer, while the negotiations continued, Colbert had ever a nervous eye upon Narbrough's fleet, for fear of the spark which would set the seas in a blaze. In order to improve the French position at the Congress he was still bent on using the Toulon squadron either against Catalonia or the Dutch Smyrna convoy, but all Du Quesne's orders were strangled by the condition that at all hazards he must keep out of Narbrough's way.[2] With his hands thus tied Du Quesne could of course effect nothing to restore the balance in favour of the French arms. Louis was compelled to give way in every direction, and a general peace was concluded in September.

[1] Pepys *Memoires touching the Royal Navy.*

[2] *Lettres de Colbert*, III. i. No. 494, May 3–13; 496, May 4–14; 498, May 18–28.

CHAPTER XXIV

TANGIER AND THE POPISH PLOT

LIKE the other treaties by which the powers had sought to curb the career of Louis, that of Nymwegen proved but a mere breathing place in his advance. Much as he had gained, it served only to whet his appetite and increase his confidence. With his army triumphant and unexhausted, his wealth increasing, and a navy that had just given signs of maturity, he was not likely to rest content, and least of all in the Mediterranean, where the promise was highest and the failure most marked. The pressure that had forced peace upon him had been irresistible, but in peace he knew how to work for his ends as well as in war. To oust the English from Tangier was still one of those ends.

How far his hand was in it we cannot tell, but it is certain that no sooner was the treaty of Nymwegen signed than a new and insidious form of attack upon the place began to make itself felt. There is no direct evidence that it was Louis's work; but, seeing what the condition of affairs was, it is impossible to believe that it had not at least his countenance. Since he had lost his hold on Charles, he had allied himself with the Anglican opposition. Indeed it was they who had forced him to make the peace, and it was still by secret influence in English political circles that he was trying to keep the British power out of his path. At the moment the situation was dominated by the notorious papist scare. The terror, which had been haunting the popular imagination ever since the treaty of Dover was signed, had burst out into ungovernable fury against all papists; and Tangier at this time had Lord Inchiquin, son of the old Irish Catholic

leader, for Governor. Now it will be remembered that Estrades had warned Montagu that there were men about the King ready to suggest the abandonment of Tangier so soon as an occasion served. It was such an occasion now. The Moors had recently become actively hostile again, and it was clear that sooner or later, if the place was to be kept, the reduced garrison would have to be brought up to its original strength. This meant increased expense and something worse. Tangier had already won itself an evil name with Protestants. Lord Inchiquin was not its first Catholic Governor: its garrison had always been largely Catholic, and it was openly branded by many as a nursery for papist troops. What better opportunity then could there be for suggesting that, instead of raising fresh troops to preserve the place, the double danger should be avoided by its evacuation?

Like most similar efforts to influence public opinion the origin of the movement is difficult to trace. Pepys believed on the highest authority that it was the Earl of Sunderland who first suggested the evacuation to the King.[1] He certainly had motive enough. His last diplomatic appointment had been to replace Montagu, who had been recalled in disgrace from the Embassy at Paris, and after the conclusion of the treaty at Nymwegen he had returned to London to begin his unscrupulous political career as in effect prime minister of the 'Chits' administration. An arch opportunist from the first, he was aptly described in a lampoon of the time as

> A Proteus, ever acting in disguise,
> A finished statesman, intricately wise;
> A second Machiavel, who soared above
> The little types of gratitude and love.

Having posed all his youth as a strenuous Protestant, he was now seeking his inspiration from Mademoiselle de

[1] On Oct. 2, 1683, Lord Dartmouth, who was privy to the whole design, told him at Tangier that 'it was first proposed by my Lord Sunderland about three years ago' ('Tangier Diary' in Smith's *Life, Journals, and Correspondence of Samuel Pepys, Esq. F.R.S.* i. 380). This would place the origin of the movement in the autumn of 1680, but it was certainly in the air a year earlier.

Kéroualle, Duchess of Portsmouth, or in other words from Barillon, the French Ambassador, and there is little reason to doubt the general correctness of Pepys's information. Indeed Sunderland himself afterwards admitted the idea was his own.[1]

The known facts of the case are these. After an existence of eighteen years, the Restoration Parliament had been dissolved. In the early spring of 1679 a general election had taken place, by no means so favourable to the Court as had been expected, and so soon as the new Parliament met, it fell savagely upon Lord Danby, the Old Cavalier minister whom they regarded as responsible for all that was evil in the King's policy, both at home and abroad. In the midst of the proceedings for his impeachment a rumour arose that the King was in treaty with Louis for the sale of Jamaica and Tangier for a sum of money which would enable him to dispense with the aid of Parliament. Whether any such idea was in the air or not, it seems clear that Barillon knew nothing of it. The opposition, however, took the matter very seriously, and worked themselves into such a state of nervousness that on April 7 they ordered a bill to be brought in for annexing Tangier to the Crown of England. Nobody in his senses—so Montagu assured the Ambassador—believed the rumour to be possible. Moreover the Court party was able to point out to the House how unwise was the bill; since if it were passed it would saddle Parliament with the burden of the garrison. But the country members were far too excited to listen. The bill was brought in, and committed to the most violent of the opposition to draft; but even then they could not rest. The King might deal with Tangier, as he had dealt with Dunkirk, before the bill could pass, and so high was the feeling that, three days later, immediately after their refusal to accept the Lords' milder proposals about Danby, the Commons passed a resolution, *nemine contradicente*: 'That this House is of opinion that those who shall advise his Majesty to part with Tangier to any

[1] Pepys to Lord Dartmouth, April 6, 1684, Smith, ii. 43.

foreign prince or state, and be instrumental therein, ought to be accounted enemies of the King and kingdom.'[1]

Though the meaning of these proceedings is clear enough, it is uncertain from what quarter came the note of alarm. Barillon affirmed that it was believed to have originated from Danby himself; but it is much more probable that Montagu was at the bottom of it. He had been deprived not only of his embassy, but also of his seat in the Council, and was bent on revenge. Danby, by warmly supporting the Orange match, had incurred Louis's enmity, and Montagu, in return for a substantial gratuity, had offered to bring about the obnoxious minister's fall. It was in this way the attack of the Commons had begun. Montagu's unscrupulous method of proceeding was to make the unpopular statesman appear responsible for Charles's degrading bargains with the French King, which Danby had done his best to neutralise, and of which Montagu himself had been the instrument. With this end in view, nothing could tell more sharply against his victim than a hint that Tangier was in the unsavoury market. Such a suggestion, moreover, had a further advantage for Montagu. To take foreign pay in those days by no means meant that a man had lost his patriotism. Montagu could earn his money without betraying his country, and nothing could serve his purpose better, both for calming his conscience and turning suspicion of French influence from himself, than warning the opposition of what he had heard from Estrades. Thus protected he would be able to attack Danby with all the virulence he pleased; and at this time he had been so successful in his game that the House had taken him under its special protection and impounded his papers to prevent the Court getting hold of them. It is extremely probable therefore that we may trace the action of the Commons to Montagu. In any case they were so far in earnest that the bill was read a first time some six weeks later, and had not the King suddenly prorogued Parlia-

[1] *Commons Journals*, ix. 588. Barillon to Louis, April 17 and 26 (n.s.), 1679, *R.O. Baschet Transcripts*, 40.

ment in order to save Danby from its animosity, the Tangier bill would certainly have become law.[1]

Thus it is most probable that it was by Louis's own pensioner that the movement against Tangier, if there was one, was checked. But Sunderland remained at the head of affairs, and the nervousness continued. A similar rumour recurred early the following year. This time it took the form that, if Parliament would not vote enough money for the fleet, the Dutch were ready to lend it on the security of Tangier. As the place had not been formally annexed, it was argued that it was in the King's power to deal with it, and that in the hands of the Prince of Orange, who was to command the garrison, it would be as useful to England as if it were in English hands. It was a suggestion—so Barillon wrote to his master—of the Dutch party at Court, who were urging an alliance with Holland instead of with France; but he found comfort in the alarm it aroused, not only with the Parliamentary opposition but with the great mercantile community.[2]

The feeling that prevailed is further reflected in the activity of the pamphleteers. In the autumn was published *The Present Danger of Tangier; or an account of its being attempted by a great army of Moors by land and under apprehensions of the French at sea.* It purports to be a letter written from Cadiz on board the 'Hopewell,' but is clearly a political tract. After referring to the popish plot and the religious troubles in Scotland, the anonymous author describes Tangier and the army of fifteen thousand Moors which he alleges is encamped against it. He fears that unless quickly succoured it will be lost, and if, he says, it should fall into some people's hands it would cause the loss of all our Mediterranean trade. Besides the danger from the Moors, he affirms that the French have forty sail of galleys threatening it from Gibraltar, and throughout he is clearly writing to

[1] *Commons Journals*, ix. 625, May 20, 1679. A copy of the bill is calendared in *Hist. MSS. Com.* v. 320.

[2] Barillon to the King, Feb. 12 and 26, 1680, *R.O. Baschet Transcripts*, 41.

create a public feeling for strengthening the place instead of giving it up.[1]

The manuscript of a similar tract, apparently of this time, exists in the Pepys collection, which dwells particularly on the strategic importance of the place—'Tangier,' it argues, 'being a most convenient station for our naval forces, which may give law to all that sail upon the Midland sea, when once our mole is finished, as also a safe port for vessels of trade.' The author sharply censures those who call it a useless expense, since already, he urges, it has forced the French King to make his Languedoc channel, make spacious harbours, and keep a large naval force on foot, to wit, thirty galleys at Marseilles with eight or nine thousand men always aboard them. In peace and war, he says, it has supplied merchantmen and ships of war with victuals and intelligence. So formidable a threat, moreover, was it to commerce that it inclined foreign princes to peace, since about the Straits they could now discover almost no sail but what bore St. George's Cross. The ugly reputation which the garrison had acquired for insubordination and lewd living he was obliged to admit, but this, he contended, was no essential evil, due to the climate, but to be attributed rather to want of business and action. It was caused by idle hands 'enjoying their neighbours' troubles, and delighting in scandalous reports, especially'—so he adds—'the women, whose tongues are not to be limited.'[2]

A still more important tract was issued the following year, 1680, which with considerable power and at length sets forth the advantages that had been already reaped from the occupation. To begin with, the author points out how at the very commencement it compelled the King of Spain to draw his forces from the Portuguese frontier down into Andalusia, and so at the most critical period of their struggle for independence it gave the Portuguese respite for a whole campaign. 'Tangier,' he proceeds, 'is so advantageously situated that it surveys the

[1] Davis, pp. 130–1.

[2] *Bolland's Mediterranean Papers*, No. 15, in the Pepysian Library, Magdalene College, Cambridge.

greatest thoroughfare of commerce in the world . . . so that no ship or vessel can pass in or out of the Mediterranean unobserved from thence. . . . Here it was that a squadron of the Dutch, on two several occasions during that war, lay in wait for our Newfoundland fleet, who had no recourse for safety but to Tangier, where they were protected and secured till the danger was over.' He then goes on to speak of how Allin and Narbrough had won all their greatest successes by being able to hold this station, and had thereby destroyed the pirates' power. Already it was a real port of refuge and naval base. 'With what ease and expedition,' he says, 'did Sir John Narbrough, the last year, careen and refit the ships under his command within the mole. I have often heard him say with great satisfaction that he would undertake to refit a squadron [there] in half the time and with half the charge that it could be done anywhere else out of England.' He then dwells upon its high strategical advantage in case of war with France or Spain, both for the protection of our commerce and the power of offence against theirs. In the case of the Dutch wars its value was particularly conspicuous. For in the first war, when it was in its infancy, 'the mole of little benefit, nor the ministers then not so much enlightened in its usefulness, the Hollanders did with a small squadron of ships scour the whole Mediterranean,' whereas in the last war they themselves were barely able to trade within the Straits at all. Finally, it had proved itself, if rightly managed, capable of being an absolute prevention to the Barbary corsairs.

'If,' he proceeds, 'Tangier be a jewel of so many extraordinary virtues, it were a great deal of pity it should adorn any prince's crown but he who wears it.' So he speaks of an alarming rumour that the place was to be sold to the French, and urges the terrible danger to our position and prestige if it were not only lost to us, but gained by them. He warns men against complaining of its expense, and reminds them how just the same was said of Dunkirk and how they have repented the sale. It is no more expense, he argues, than one first-rate ship in

war. 'Yet,' he asks, 'did ever anybody complain that our ships were a burden?'

In conclusion he dwells on the commercial importance to which its position seems to entitle it over and above its strategical advantages. He foresees it may become the great emporium of the American, East Indian, and Levant trade—the main centre of distribution for all Europe, if only it be kept a free port. 'It is an easy matter therefore,' he concludes, 'for the Prince of Tangier to command our northern world, and to give laws to Europe and Africa. The situation of Rome, of Carthage, of Constantinople, of London, Paris, and other imperial cities is nothing near so advantageous for that purpose as Tangier if all things be considered.'[1]

It is clear therefore that by this time its true value was fully appreciated, and the attempt to bring it to the fate of Dunkirk failed. Still no help for its adequate maintenance was to be had from the House of Commons. A new Parliament met in October 1679; but the King, in face of the movement for the exclusion of his Catholic brother from the succession, dared not let it sit, and it was continually prorogued. Still, in spite of his penury, he contrived to send out reinforcements. In the course of the year 1680 the garrison was brought up to two battalions: and the help came none too soon. Towards the end of the previous year the pressure from the Moors began to increase to a dangerous degree. All work on the mole had to be stopped, and the money allotted for it hastily spent on the fortifications. By the end of March 1680 the Moors had sat down before the new works in force, and formed a regular siege. Sir Palmes Fairborne, who as deputy governor was commanding in Lord Inchiquin's absence, at once recognised that he had to confront a situation such as had never yet threatened the place. In the great school of arms which had formed round the siege of Candia there were numbers of Mussulman soldiers who had gradually acquired a high degree of skill in the

[1] '*A Discourse touching Tangier*,' *in a letter to a person of quality, to which is added* '*The Interest of Tangier*,' *by another hand* (*Harleian Miscellany*, ed. 1810, vol. viii. 391 *et seq.*). The *Discourse* is dated Oct. 20, 1679.

European methods of siege work. When the capitulation put an end to their employment, it was natural for the more adventurous of them to seek further service with Muley Ishmael, the rising star that had supplanted Guylan in Morocco. At Tangier then it was no longer a question of untutored warfare and ill-directed assaults as in the earlier days, but of a formal siege with all the order of trench and mine that modern science could suggest.

Fortunately, Fairborne was just the man that was wanted. He too had served his apprenticeship to arms in the Candiote school under the Venetian colours, and had been an officer in the Tangier regiment from its formation in 1661. No one knew the possibilities of the place better than he; he was a soldier born and bred, with a high reputation both for courage and conduct, and Tangier had never been so well ordered as during the years he had been acting governor. The chance had come to show his mettle, and at every turn the utmost skill of the Moors in devising approaches was promptly met and foiled with equal art. The fleet too was doing its best to support him. It was now under the command of Arthur Herbert, afterwards famous as Lord Torrington, an officer of quite the modern type. Having joined the service in 1663 at the age of sixteen, he had been on active service almost ever since. In both Dutch wars he commanded a ship, and had served in the Mediterranean in almost every squadron that had gone there. He had had a ship under Allin, Spragge, and Narbrough. In Narbrough's last and most important fleet he held the rank of Vice-Admiral, and when in May 1679 Narbrough went home he remained in command of the station. A year later he received his commission as Admiral and Commander-in-Chief. Surrounded by a devoted band of captains, and thoroughly familiar with his work, he was able to render material assistance to the Governor. Tangier was in his eyes, as in Narbrough's, an invaluable naval station. He regarded it as his headquarters, and in the modern fashion had a house in the town.[1] Fairborne could not have wished for

[1] Smith, i. 401. Pepys censures him for this, and generally gives him a bad character. But Pepys was so devoted an adherent of his patrons

a better colleague or one who had the preservation of the place more earnestly at heart. But none knew better than he that all modern experience showed how the defence of fortified places must ultimately be beaten by a regular attack. Under the conditions that existed, and against the great odds to which it was exposed, the place could not hold out indefinitely. Bit by bit the Moors were eating their way in. By the first week in April they had isolated two of the outer forts. For more than a month both of them held out; but, on May 12, one had to surrender while the other was cleverly evacuated, and Fairborne was able to secure a truce of four months.

But he was too good a soldier not to see his fate before him, unless Charles was ready to put forth a strength to which he was probably unequal. To Pepys, the secretary of the Tangier Council, he wrote a private letter in which he laid bare his thoughts, and clearly sounded the last note. 'I only desire,' he wrote in sending home a report of the situation, 'that you possess yourself with the opinion that it will be impossible ever to maintain this garrison by any other ways but by open war, unless the enemy would condescend in time of peace to [our] fortifying the town, which, so far as I can learn, they absolutely refuse, but upon consideration of powder are willing [for us] to carry on the work for the mole; by which you may conclude that the enemy do only defer their attempt against the town till the mole be made more convenient for them. Therefore it will be more for the King and kingdom's service (I say, if his Majesty cannot maintain it with such a force that we may be able to beat them in the field) to blow up both town and mole. This I have endeavoured to digest amongst my friends as most proper, and what I foresee must be the end.' [1]

But Charles could not so easily bring himself to lose the most glittering jewel he had added to the British crown. It was all that remained of the brilliant hope

that we can attach no more importance to his dislike of Herbert than we can to his dislike of Monk. Admiration for Lord Dartmouth was at the bottom of the one, for Lord Sandwich of the other.

[1] *Hodgkin MSS.* (*Hist. MSS. Com.*), p. 176, May 24, 1680.

and high purpose with which he had begun his reign. Struggling as he was with the influences that were dragging him down, he still clung to it with a last effort of his better self. With Tangier would go his last claim to be considered a great power in Europe. Nor was he without support. In the ministry was Sir William Temple to counteract Sunderland's influence, and in him he had at his elbow an adviser who had perhaps the clearest view of any man of his time how the prestige of the country could best be preserved.

The newsletters of the time clearly reflect the anxiety that prevailed. 'All fear,' says one of them on June 12, 'that Tangiers will fall,' and again on July 31, 'There are hopes we can still hold Tangiers.'[1] The Government had, in fact, determined to make a serious effort to save it. The Court—so Barillon kept informing Louis—was wholly absorbed in the affair. The merchants regarded the preservation of the place as essential to the safety of the Levant trade, and, in spite of the danger of letting seasoned troops leave the country at so critical a political juncture, something had to be done. True, as he says, there were courtiers who began to whisper that Tangier was of no use and had better be abandoned. 'I believe,' wrote the Ambassador, 'if they did not fear what would happen when Parliament met, they would make up their minds to abandon Tangier after destroying the works that are in progress on the mole.'[2] For the time, at any rate, public opinion and Charles's remnants of ambition were too strong for such counsels to be listened to. Thirteen companies of infantry, including five of the Coldstream Guards, were to be ready to go out in June, and more were to follow, and Spain was persuaded to provide two hundred horse. To complete the testimony of energy, Lord Ossory, the Duke of Ormonde's idolised son and the Bayard of the English Court, was induced to accept the governorship. The most brilliant of the golden youth eagerly volunteered to accompany him. At sea, on

[1] *Le Fleming MSS.* pp. 168, 170.

[2] Barillon to the King, July 31, 1680 (n.s.) Also his despatches from May 9 to August 24, *R.O. Baschet Transcripts*, 41.

land, and in diplomacy he had won equal distinction, and, if Tangier could be saved, every one knew he was the man to do it. Adored by the seamen no less than the soldiers, and the darling of society as well, he gave to the King's resolution a distinction which left nothing to be desired. But a cloud had settled over Charles's star that not even his brilliance could dispel. Ossory himself received the appointment as his doom, and saw open before him the grave of his reputation. As he told Evelyn, he was being thrown away, not only on a hazardous venture, but on one that in most men's minds was an impossibility. Yet he prepared himself to obey, sinking every day into a gloomier foreboding, till, before he could sail, death came mercifully to his release. With him died the newly kindled enthusiasm. No one was appointed to succeed him. The King wearily abandoned his effort. The Coldstreams and the other old troops were countermanded, and it was decided to send a small relief of fresh levies, and leave the rest to Parliament when it met.[1]

Meanwhile the truce at Tangier was fast ebbing away. As no new governor had been appointed, the command remained in the capable hands of Sir Palmes Fairborne. The truce expired on September 15, and the Moors immediately reopened hostilities; but Fairborne, having received some reinforcements and being backed by Herbert's fleet, had everything in order. He at once assumed the offensive, and, having now a sufficiency of cavalry, was able to do so with success. During the following months, by a series of skilfully designed operations boldly carried out, he succeeded in reoccupying all the positions he had been forced to abandon by the terms of the truce, and firmly built out a position from which he meant to strike the Moors a final blow in the field. During all these operations he superintended the work in person, exposing himself on horseback in complete contempt of the enemy, till on October 24, in directing a far advanced work that practically completed his scheme, he was seriously wounded. The Moors seized the occasion for a strenuous effort to recover the ground they

[1] Barillon to Louis, Aug. 24, 1680 (n.s.), *R.O. Baschet Transcripts*, 41.

had lost, and during the following days redoubled their efforts in the trenches with alarming insistence. But Fairborne equally saw his hour had come, and determined on a sally of the whole garrison in force. On the 27th all was ready. Herbert organised an important diversion with his boats to threaten the enemy's flank on the opposite side of the bay, besides taking command of a battalion of seamen in the main attack of the troops. Fairborne, whose wound had taken a dangerous turn, was unable to sit his horse; but, though he was compelled to resign his place to Colonel Sackville, his second in command, he had himself carried to a chair on his veranda, whence he could survey the whole field of operations.

The movement began with a feint by the Spanish horse to the westward against the enemy's left, supported by the workmen engaged on the mole, who had been furnished with drums and colours to give them the appearance of infantry. At the same time the boats of the fleet developed their demonstration to the eastward against the enemy's right, and succeeded in holding a large force of Moors in that direction throughout the day. The real attack was made from the centre with five battalions of infantry, the naval brigade, and the three troops of British horse. With splendid dash the men flung themselves on the advanced trenches of the Moors, where a stubborn fight at push of pike took place, till one by one they were carried and the Moors pressed back to their original lines. But Sackville was not yet content: he had only just begun. There was no pause except for filling up the trenches to make a passage for the horse. This done, the advance was renewed, and all the horse, including the Spanish who had now joined the main attack, passed over. The resistance of the Moors was fiercer than ever, especially from their cavalry, who charged again and again to protect the beaten infantry. But all was of no avail. As the Moors were dislodged from the trenches, Sackville's cavalry kept dashing into them and cutting them to pieces until a complete rout declared itself. The British infantry and seamen rushed the enemy's camp, killing the Moors, who all refused quarter,

among the tents, while the cavalry pursued them with great execution a mile or more into the open country. The victory was complete; Fairborne's methods had proved irresistible, and it was the crown of his life. All day long, as he had watched the resistless advance, he had been slowly sinking; and when the exultant troops were returning with shouts of triumph to their quarters, he passed away. So died a fine soldier and a worthy pioneer of British Mediterranean power. He had passed all his best years, as he said in his last words, 'doing my endeavour for the advancing of my King and master's interest, to withstand the Moors' attempts and gain myself reputation.' He was honoured, as he richly deserved, with a monument in Westminster Abbey, and Dryden wrote the epitaph. It refers to his early service at Candia and tells how—

> His youth and age, his life and death, combine,
> As in some great and regular design,
> All of a piece throughout and all divine.
> Still nearer heaven his virtue shone more bright,
> Like rising flames expanding in their height;
> The martyr's glory crowned the soldier's fight.

He had saved Tangier, and not only that. For so hard were the Moors hit that they made advances for a cessation of arms, and Sackville was able to exact from them, on his own terms, a truce for six months. The position was still further secured by the arrival of the new reliefs. They took the form of Colonel Percy Kirke with his newly raised Second Tangier Regiment, destined to be famous as the 'King's Own,' and notorious in Monmouth's rebellion as 'Kirke's Lambs.' Still Sackville did not conceal the fact that the inherent defects of the situation, on which Fairborne had insisted, were still unchanged. He reported home that things could not continue as they were. A much wider line of defence must be secured in order to take in the positions which commanded the place if it was to be rendered permanently tenable, and 'unless,' said he, 'the King can send ten thousand foot and eight hundred or a thousand horse, it is impossible ever to possess that ground, which must

be had before these fortifications can be made according to the draft sent his Majesty.'[1] The estimate for completing the necessary works was 300,000*l.* a year for ten years, an outlay which he feared was too large for his Majesty's undertaking.

Meanwhile the only hope of securing the place was to convert the truce into a lasting peace. For this purpose Sir James Leslie had come out as ambassador. It was characteristic, however, of Charles's administration that when he sailed his presents had not been forthcoming, and he dared not go to Fez without them. The Emperor consequently began to take an ugly tone. From a potentate whose favourite pastime was believed to be the invention and trial of new tortures, and whose frenzies of self-importance were as ungovernable as his cruelty, anything might be expected, and it was necessary to keep him quiet at all costs. It was Colonel Kirke who stepped into the breach and boldly undertook a mission to the Moorish capital. The effect was remarkable. There was something in the Colonel's fierce and reckless personality which hit the tyrant's fancy. He treated Kirke with marked affection, consented for his sake to receive the dilatory ambassador, and finally vowed that so long as Kirke remained in Tangier there should never be a gun fired at the place, but that it should be furnished with provisions and enjoy the benefits of a hearty peace. Thus all difficulties were removed and Leslie was able to conclude a peace for four years on the sole condition that no new fortifications should be erected.

The retention of the English hold on the Mediterranean now depended on whether the King could come to terms with his new Parliament. In no other way could he hope to get the funds necessary for Tangier. Louis, fully alive to the situation, was again straining every resource to prevent an accommodation, and so far French influence had been successful. For a whole year after the general election successive prorogations had pre-

[1] A sketch of the proposed works by Beckman, who by this time had been received into the British service, is among a number of water-colour sketches of Tangier, all from his hand, in *Add. MSS.* 32323.

vented any business being done; but at last, in October 1680, about a month before Sackville's victory, Parliament had been allowed to meet, and in his opening speech the King had particularly requested the Commons to help him in preserving Tangier. But the scare of the popish plot had not yet burnt itself out, and the new Parliament at once showed itself absorbed with the exclusion of the Duke of York. When the news of the battle arrived Charles ventured to send them a message reminding them of his desire. The message was duly considered, but it resulted only in a resolution to present the King with an address on the dangerous state of the kingdom. In this address they recalled to the King that Tangier had had several popish governors, that one of them then lay in the Tower for complicity with the popish plot, and that the garrison had always consisted largely of popish troops. They therefore ventured to hope that if they voted a supply for the place they would receive assurance that they should not thereby augment the strength of their popish adversaries. The address was repeated a month later, and Charles replied by begging them to state what assurance they required, trusting that they would consider the present state of the kingdom in such a way as to enable him to preserve Tangier. Then came the final blow. The Commons could not be turned from the one question on which it seemed to them that the future of the country hung. They bluntly announced the condition of their assistance must be the passing of the Exclusion Bill and the dismissal of every minister who opposed it.[1]

So the knell of Tangier was sounded. Three days later Parliament was dissolved, and after a despairing effort in March to hold another at Oxford, which was dissolved after a week's session, Charles's attempts at constitutional government came finally to an end.

[1] *Commons Journals*, ix., November 15, 17, 29, December 20, 1680, and January 4, 7, 1681.

CHAPTER XXV

THE EVACUATION OF TANGIER

Louis had won an incalculable victory. At last he had succeeded in sowing irremediable dissension between Charles and his Parliament. He had neutralised the only factor in the European situation that was beyond his strength, and the master of the seas was once more forced into the position of his pensioner, with no hope of escape. Charles, it is true, had finally triumphed in his ill-starred attempt to dominate the constitution, but it was at the cost of his position in Europe—the position which had been the one lofty sentiment of his life. On every side Louis was ready to pursue his career. In the Mediterranean he had never been better placed. The Languedoc canal was finished, and in the summer of 1681 it was opened with high festivity, while at Toulon Vauban had been at work doubling the capabilities and strength of the port and arsenal, and Du Quesne, ranging the Mediterranean with a formidable squadron, was at last asserting a real mastery over the Barbary corsairs. It was a moment of all others when Tangier should have reached the position that had so long been sought for it, and which, at the expense of so much blood and treasure, it had nearly attained.

For a couple of years longer it lay undisturbed under the governorship of Kirke, who succeeded Sackville. His relations with Fez, though salted with constant bickerings, remained most cordial; the place continued to be regularly supplied; squadrons acting from it under Herbert and Cloudesley Shovell cruised against the corsairs with every success, and nothing beyond the

iniquities of the garrison under Kirke's loose notions of good manners sullied its appearance of prosperity. While Kirke was allowing the place to become a sink of immorality and corruption, the Emperor continued to assure him of his admiration for the 'whiteness and cleanness of his heart,' and to vow 'he was the best of all Christians that ever were.' Still Kirke mistrusted him for many reasons. When the fleet went home to refit, the Emperor openly renounced the maritime clauses of the peace, the 'Sea treaty' as it was called, and the depredations of his ships went on as before. Kirke felt the peace could not last, and, while taking every precaution against surprise, never ceased to demand reinforcements and supplies. His importunity and his anxiety no doubt did something to hasten the end, but Charles continued to hold on. At the end of 1682, Herbert came out again with a powerful squadron to enforce the 'Sea treaty,' and with him he brought large quantities of stores and drafts of troops. The Moors then changed their note and were all obsequiousness, so little did it seem to require to keep Tangier safe.

Yet that little was more than Charles could spare in the crowd of difficulties that he had made for himself. The navy, moreover, had been going rapidly downhill. When the papist scare had sent the Duke of York abroad and Pepys to the Tower as a suspect, the office of Lord High Admiral had been put in commission. The men chosen for the duty, if we may believe half that Pepys says, were very ill chosen, and the old evils and abuses rapidly declared themselves. The King was robbed right and left, and everything about the service except the budget was neglected.[1] Financial difficulties began to press the Court more and more severely, and, in the confusion and dishonesty that prevailed, Tangier naturally presented itself as a ready means of economy. Thus, early in 1683, Charles had to face the inevitable end of his autocratic policy, and Tangier was doomed.

In February, in answer to Kirke's continued demands for reinforcements, Sir Leoline Jenkins, Secretary of State,

[1] Pepys, *Memoires touching the Royal Navy.*

wrote to him complaining that Tangier was already costing more than all the home garrisons put together. The letter was followed by the arrival early in March of Admiral Sir John Berry with orders for Kirke to banish all the Jews. Kirke had already reported that through them the Moors had established a regular system of intelligence by which nothing in the garrison could be kept secret. This order was the first indication of what was coming.[1] Up to that time there appears to have been little suspicion in Tangier of the fate that overhung it. Kirke, with his hands strengthened by the men and stores which Herbert had brought out, was more busy than ever strengthening the fortifications and preparing for any outburst from his truculent admirer. Absolute secrecy was still maintained and no further sign was given. Though rumours began to disturb the garrison, they were little regarded. The secrecy indeed with which the resolution of the Government was shrouded was so profound that its immediate cause is nowhere on record. Still, what it was is scarcely doubtful.

Sunderland's opportunism and the wiles of the French Ambassador had led him into supporting the Exclusion Bill, with the result that in February 1681 he had been struck off the Privy Council. He lost little time, however, in trimming his sails, and by Louise de Kéroualle's influence was reconciled to the Duke of York in August the next year, and at his request readmitted to the Council. But Barillon and the French mistress still pressed him forward, and with so much success that in January 1683 he re-entered the Government as Secretary of State for the North. It was just at this time the momentous Tangier question was reopened. Pepys indeed was expressly told by the man who had the best means of

[1] Kirke to Jenkins, February 22, 1683, *Tangier Papers*, bundle 39. See also 'The first proposals for Tangier,' *Dartmouth MSS.* p. 84. The paper is undated, but it mentions Berry's mission, and thus fixes the time about which the evacuation was decided on. Berry reached Tangier on the Thursday before March 8, 1683, *ibid.* p. 80. The 'First Proposals' must therefore have been drawn up before he sailed, or early in February—about the time, that is, of Jenkins's complaint to Kirke. This is confirmed by what Dartmouth told Pepys. See *post*, pp. 408, 410–12.

knowing the truth, 'that it was taken up again upon my Lord Sunderland's coming in again.' The King, he said, was himself the first mover of it, but clearly he thought that it was Sunderland's idea. There is indeed but too much reason to suspect that Sunderland went even further than urging the evacuation. There is evidence that about this time he made some kind of overtures to Barillon with a view to selling the place to France. Barillon apparently could not believe the offer was seriously made, and, suspecting some snare, refused to take the matter up, but the suggestion remains as one more stigma on Sunderland's name.[1]

The motive of Charles's advisers is clear enough. They were in the midst of their attack on the municipal corporations, and had just determined to clinch the King's constitutional triumph by an attack on the charter of London itself. To this end they desired not only to cut down every avoidable expense, but to get into the kingdom all the troops that could possibly be collected. The original draft scheme for the evacuation is much more concerned with the disposal of the garrison when it returned than with how to get it safely out. Barillon traced the whole scheme to the Duke of York, Rochester, and Sunderland, the nefarious triumvirate in whose hands Charles was now but a puppet. The Marquis of Halifax, Barillon's and James's chief opponent, did his best—so the Ambassador says—to stop it, supported by all who still clung to a hope of parliamentary government being restored.[2]

But all was of no avail. The discovery of the Rye House plot had put a fresh weapon into the hands of the King's evil counsellors, and they had their way. It was this surrender that marks Charles's final lapse into military despotism, and with the determination to evacuate

[1] Barillon to Louis, Aug. 15, 1683: 'Je craindrais de parler sur cette affaire à cause de ce qui s'est passé il y a six mois. . . . Milord Sunderland m'a déjà dit: "Vous voyez que l'offre qu'on vous a faite estait effective et qu'il n'a tenu qu'au Roi votre maistre d'avoir Tanger."' *R.O. Baschet Transcripts*, 44. It does not appear, from any despatch of Barillon's in the early part of the year, that he communicated this offer to Louis at the time.

[2] Barillon to Louis, Aug. 15, 1683, *R.O. Baschet Transcripts*, 44.

Tangier he cut the last tie that bound him to the ideas of the Great Rebellion. It was that pregnant upheaval that had carried England to Mediterranean power, and it was its ebb that sucked her back.

In such haste was the Government to get the troops home that it was originally intended that all the ships available should assemble at Tangier in May. Some one, however, must have pointed out that it was an operation which could not be conducted in a hurry. At any rate the execution of the scheme was delayed for more elaborate preparations, and it was not till July 2 that the final instructions were signed. As a preliminary step to their execution, Herbert was recalled, and the project was kept an absolute secret, known to no one outside the King's immediate circle, except to Pepys's informant, George Legge, recently made Lord Dartmouth. It was to him the obnoxious commission was to be entrusted. He had served with distinction throughout the Dutch wars as a naval officer, and had since risen through various offices to that of Master-General of the Ordnance and Master of the Horse to the Duke of York. It is in this appointment we see the hand that really loosed the British hold on the Mediterranean. Dartmouth was the most devoted partisan that James had, and since the defeat of the Exclusion Bill had settled his position as heir to the throne, the inevitable effect had been that it was he, not Charles, who was king. James's real reign began with the dissolution of his brother's last Parliament, and Dartmouth was one of the men he chiefly looked to for the repression of any attempt at resistance to his rule.

The story of the melancholy business, which this fine officer thus had thrust upon him, has fortunately been enlivened by Samuel Pepys. The manner in which he became connected with it is eloquent of the extreme secrecy in which the whole affair was wrapped. Everything had been done personally by the King and his brother. Neither the Admiralty nor the Tangier Council had been permitted to have a finger in the preparations; but on Saturday, July 28, Pepys, who since his release from the Tower had been closely attached to the Duke

of York, received sudden orders to repair within forty-eight hours to Portsmouth, where the fleet was assembled. Not a word of explanation was given him, nor was it apparently till the following Friday, when Lord Dartmouth joined, that he was informed he was to go out on his staff. Still the secret of the expedition was withheld from him. Some hesitation seems to have prevailed at Court. Dartmouth had not yet been handed his commission, and no sooner had he reached Portsmouth than he received an intimation from Sunderland that he was not to sail till further orders, which would probably reach him not later than Monday. But on that day, instead of sailing orders came a summons to Windsor 'to speak with the King once more.' What the trouble was no one could tell. All they knew was that the preparations for sailing were to proceed, and Sunderland assured the General there was nothing serious. 'I will only tell you now,' he wrote, 'that the occasion of these directions can be of no prejudice, and may be of advantage to your journey and the business you go about.'

It is Barillon who lets us into the secret. The fact was he had just and only just learnt what was in the wind, and he immediately hurried off a special messenger to Louis to ask how he was to act. He had further discovered that the Portuguese ambassador had also fathomed the secret, and was making the most strenuous efforts to be allowed an option of purchase. Arlington had betrayed the project, and what Barillon was so anxious to learn from Versailles was whether his master would prefer to see the place destroyed or in Portuguese hands. In view of his behaviour over Sunderland's offer six months previously, he did not think well to move in the matter directly, but clearly he had hopes that a purchase by the Portuguese might be made a step towards a French occupation. It was to consider this proposal of the Portuguese envoy that Dartmouth was summoned to Windsor. But every one was against it—James and his confederates because they believed the necessary negotiations would delay too long the return of the troops—Halifax because he feared it covered an eventual

cession of the place to France. In vain the Portuguese envoy went so far as to call on Barillon and beg for his support. The opposition was too well united, and all he could exact was that if a properly accredited plenipotentiary met Dartmouth at Tangier with full authority to accept the British terms, the thing might be arranged. Two hundred thousand crowns was believed to be Charles's price, though probably it was never seriously thought the suggestion would come to a head.[1]

At any rate the Portuguese move was not allowed to cause any further delay. In two days Dartmouth was back again and every one embarked the same day. Still they could not sail, for the weather kept obstinately adverse. Every one, as they lay idle at St. Helen's, did his best to penetrate the mystery; but, though Pepys was named in Dartmouth's commission as his sole councillor in the fleet, he was still no wiser than the rest. He had even written to his friends, he tells us, in perfect good faith to assure them that the rumours about the evacuation of Tangier had no foundation. He pardonably imagined that, if there had been any truth in them, he of all people would have been told. It was not till August 13, as they still lay windbound under the Isle of Wight, that Lord Dartmouth took him into his cabin and told him in the strictest confidence that the object of the expedition was the disarmament and destruction of Tangier. To Pepys it was a severe shock. It did not receive his approval, and since he had been so long Tangier secretary he was not a little nettled at not having been consulted. 'I shall,' he wrote, 'by the grace of God give the same, and perhaps more, obedience both passive and active to it than I might have done had my mean advice been preconsulted in it.'[2]

In this praiseworthy spirit he continued to act. Dartmouth handed him a note of the reasons for the step which had been agreed on in the Cabinet, directing him to embody them in a minute. They were lame

[1] Barillon to Louis, Aug. 5–15, 9–19, and 13–23, *R.O. Baschet Transcripts*, 44; Smith, *Tangier Diary*, 325 *et seq.*, *Dartmouth MSS.* pp. 87–8.

[2] Pepys to Houblon, St. Helen's, Aug. 16, 1683, Smith, i. 336.

enough, but Pepys was equal to the task, adding fresh considerations which his pliable and well-informed brain was able to suggest. His work was of peculiar delicacy and importance. The fact was that every one concerned was highly nervous about what they had got to do. Tangier was the symbol of the new-born spirit of imperialism that pervaded the country. There was no doubt its abandonment would be unpopular, and unless it could be clearly justified there was the danger that Dartmouth and his staff would be made the scapegoats, and that Tangier would be used against them as Dunkirk had been used against Clarendon. Pepys with his way to make in the world was as anxious as any one. The hard part of it was that there were no definite instructions to ease the responsibility. In theory they were going out to report on the place and to act accordingly; and there was talk among the staff that the King meant to break the news to his people by saying that the experts had pressed him to do it against his will. Pepys therefore bluntly asked his chief how things stood. 'Before we parted,' he said, 'I asked my lord whether the King was indeed satisfied in this business; for,' he added characteristically, 'we should be able to give our advice accordingly in reference to what he might expect from it, whether the success was good or bad. He answered in plain words . . . that the King was the fondest man in the world of it, and had declared to Lord Dartmouth at his coming away that it was the greatest service any subject could do him. On my lord's adding that he had understood some persons at Court did nevertheless labour to render this ill to the King, to do him hurt . . . I took occasion to say something of my being sorry for it; but he was not the first that had been so used in obeying the King's commands and labouring to serve him. He answered, it did not trouble him (though by his looks and manner of speech I saw sufficiently it did), for the King would do him right in it and did at this time discourse publicly of the folly of keeping Tangier any longer.'[1]

Having thus ascertained the official view, Pepys saw

[1] *Tangier Diary*, p. 380.

his way clear before him and promptly crystallised his opinion. 'Lord!' he exclaimed, as on September 14 they anchored in Tangier road, 'how could anybody ever think a place fit to be kept at this charge, that, overlooked by so many hills, can never be secured against an enemy?' On this note he continued to harp to his great comfort, and indeed it was the real crux of the situation. Not only was it the one valid excuse for the evacuation, but also a grave cause of anxiety as to whether the operation could be carried through without disaster. So far had the lines advanced, and so near to completion and well-built was the mole, that it was clear the work of demolition would take much longer and therefore be much more hazardous than was expected Dartmouth began to doubt whether, with the force and stores at his command, it was even possible. He became seriously depressed and was barely prevented by Pepys and others from officially informing the Moors what was intended, and negotiating their forbearance. He had hoped the whole affair would be over in three weeks, but it was three weeks before it could be really begun.

A very necessary preliminary was to secure from the captains of the fleet a declaration that the place was unfit for a naval station. This difficult duty was entrusted to Sir John Berry, Dartmouth's vice-admiral, a 'tarpaulin' officer who had worked his way up from the forecastle by sheer merit and hard fighting. In Charles's first war he won an action in the West Indies against the French and Dutch, and at the battle of Solebay had earned his spurs by rescuing the Duke of York when he was nearly overpowered by superior force. He had also served with distinction under Allin and others in the Mediterranean. He was assisted by Sir William Booth, the most successful of Herbert's captains against the corsairs. But even these men found the task extremely difficult. 'Sir William Booth,' wrote Pepys on October 14, 'gave me an account of the ado he had had with some of Herbert's young fellows to get signed the paper my lord desires about the mole and harbour of Tangier.'

It was no wonder. The mole was now 475 yards long

with a mean breadth of nearly thirty-seven yards, and a height above low water mark of eighteen feet, and for the past four years Herbert and his captains had been making it the base of their successful operations against the corsairs. Yet they were expected to say that, owing to the nearness of 'the Great Ocean,' it was impossible to render the harbour secure except at a ruinous cost, that even if it could ever be completed it would quickly silt up, and that it was 'altogether unuseful to his Majesty for receiving, careening, or preserving his Majesty's ships.' With such a document to be signed it was certainly to Herbert's credit that it had been thought expedient to recall him. His stubborn independence and strong convictions were difficulties not to be faced at such a crisis. He had, however, left behind him several junior captains, who were devoted to him and his ideas. These men Dartmouth had express authority to command to his flag, provided he did not thereby interrupt the operations for which they had been detailed. Dartmouth did call them to his flag, and—so Pepys tells us—went out of his way to gain their goodwill. Nevertheless, as it seems, they resented the supersession of their old chief, and it was among these men —'Herbert's creatures,' as Pepys calls them in loyal indignation—that the ringleaders of the opposition were found.

The most obstinate were Cloudesley Shovell, who had been flying his first flag as commodore of the little cruiser squadron that Herbert had left behind, Francis Wheler, and Matthew Aylmer—all of them men destined to rank among the founders of British Mediterranean power. But Pepys had no patience with them and the ideas their experience had given them. 'Though they have been prevailed with by Booth,' he says, 'to sign this, yet they did declare to Booth their satisfaction in the harbour when they signed it, and will be ready to do the like when they come into England. This is your men of honour and gentlemen! at least the two latter.'[1] Shovell was only a 'tarpaulin,' and presumably not expected by Pepys to forswear himself to oblige his chief. Aylmer was a young Irish officer of the 'courtier' type, who had only

[1] *Tangier Diary*, pp. 393, 398, 411, 438. *Dartmouth MSS.* 89.

entered the service four years before, under the wing of the Duke of Buckingham. He rose to be Commander-in-Chief in the Mediterranean, and afterwards, as governor of Greenwich Hospital, was the founder of the Naval School. Wheler also was to hold the same high command, and to be lost with his flagship and all hands in a gale off Gibraltar. Among other of 'Herbert's young fellows' was George Rooke, destined by a strange turn of fortune to be the means of giving back to his country what Pepys was helping to throw away. For it was when he was flying the Mediterranean flag that Gibraltar rose like a phœnix from the ashes of Tangier. Still he was by nature a courtier and politician, and, whether from conviction or not, he seems to have made no bones about doing what was wanted.[1]

Against Pepys's ingenuity the indignation of the stalwart Mediterranean men was of no more avail than Rooke's compliance. A series of cunningly framed questions were put to them, from which they found it impossible to escape. Both Rooke and Shovell had careened their ships under shelter of the mole, but they had to confess it was done with some difficulty from the swell. Then they all had to face the ugly fact that on a recent occasion Herbert, having to refit his squadron, had carried the repairing hulk, which had been established at Tangier, and all the necessary stores over to Gibraltar, as being a better place for the work.[2] Entangled in admissions which they knew did not express their real judgment, it is no wonder they remained stubbornly in their old opinion. Whether or not the harbour could ever be made fit to receive the higher rates, they knew it was already a practicable station for the class of vessel that was best adapted for keeping a firm hand on the Barbary pirates, and for obtaining intelligence in time of war, no less than for harbouring the smaller merchantmen which were incapable of protecting themselves. Still there was no escape

[1] Davis, p. 231. He was then thirty-three and had commanded a ship under both Narbrough and Herbert.

[2] See the Captains' Report, *Tangier Papers*, bundle 40, Oct. 13, 1683, especially questions 7 and 8.

from Pepys's skill, and in ten days, about the middle of October, all the signatures were affixed. At the same time a similar declaration was obtained, apparently without difficulty, from the officers of the garrison as to the military defects of the place, which were real enough, and the work of demolition could proceed.

Of a Portuguese plenipotentiary nothing had been heard. The ambassador in London did not for a moment relax his efforts, and on Louis's instructions Barillon kept urging the Duke of York to agree. He went to see the Prince several times, as though on his own initiative, and pressed upon him the loss of prestige which the destruction of the fortress would entail, and the disgrace of so complete a reversal of policy. James would only reply that it was no disgrace for the King to reverse the policy of ministers that had given him bad advice, and it was better for the royal interest to have a strong body of troops at home than a weak naval station abroad. Any chance, moreover, which there might have been of the matter being carried through with sufficient promptitude was ended by the death of the Portuguese King, and Dartmouth had no alternative but to act on his obnoxious orders.[1]

It was a laborious undertaking and its difficulty gave the lie to the declaration that had been wrung from the seamen. Shere, the engineer who had succeeded Cholmley, calculated that without the foundations the mole then contained nearly three million cubic feet of concrete and masonry, weighing near 170,000 tons, all of which must be destroyed, and that it would take a thousand men over two hundred days to do it. Lord Dartmouth wrote home that the part which Shere had built was as hard as the rocks. It appeared almost indestructible, though, as the General said, 'he was showing his great abilities in the destruction of his own building.' As no ordinary military methods would touch it, he was blasting it to pieces with drills and small charges in the modern way, which to Pepys at least was new. Yet, in spite of all Shere's skill and zeal, like a man butchering his own child

[1] Barillon to Louis, Aug. 30–Sept. 9, *R.O. Baschet's Transcripts* 44

as they sympathetically said, it was soon clear that his estimate of the time the demolition would take must prove correct. Month after month went by with continuous and infinite labour of the whole force at Dartmouth's command. Storms constantly hampered their efforts, and at the end of the year it was still far from done.[1]

As the work, upon which so much blood and treasure and so much high purpose and devotion had been spent, stubbornly yielded to Shere's ingenuity, lamentations came in from all sides. Typical of these is a letter written to Pepys by an Englishman in Cadiz before the work had actually begun. 'I heartily congratulate,' he says, 'your safe arrival at Tangier, but if you come about what we are persuaded here you do, I had rather you and all that come about the design had tarried at home. I am sure in no age, nor by any people, was ever Tangier thought useless and contemptible as not worth keeping, till this we live in, and that by our own countrymen. If we go as high as history affords us records, we shall find Tangier always esteemed . . . When the English had got Tangier, they, as well as all the world, believed they had a considerable and important place, as well for their convenience in all respects as for its capacity for prejudicing their enemies. . . . The French covet, the Spaniard and Hollander dread it, one as to trade, the other from neighbourhood and the prejudice they may receive from it. Then of the safeguard and convenience to trade in case of war with Spain, none that knows anything is ignorant. After all must a place, qualified by so many advantageous and unequalled benefits, be parted with on the score of its being chargeable, and we the only people that ever thought so? Where is the honour and reputation of the nation? . . . . The parting with it in any manner will render us very inconsiderable and necessitous to all the world: for what will they think of us, esteem or dread us, if we cannot maintain a place so much to

[1] In the *Tangier Papers* (*R.O. Colonial*), bundle 40, is an interesting plan showing how the mole was destroyed by blasting and crosscuts, and the débris used to foul the anchorage.

our convenience to preserve? . . . You are, as much as any man, sensible of what advantage Tangier is to us here, and to the nation in general. If anything is designed against it, pray use your endeavours to prevent it.'[1]

Such protests were useless. At home the political struggle was uppermost in men's minds and everything had to be subservient to it. A week after the seamen's declaration was signed, Shere's first charge was fired. A week later again the Mayor and Corporation were embarked. Thereby the tie which bound Tangier to the Imperial Crown of Britain was severed, and, curiously enough, it was to George Rooke was assigned the duty of carrying them home. By the first week in November the last of the inhabitants were shipped away, and the work of demolition could go on without impediment. All through the winter it continued as well as the storms would permit, and with one eye always anxiously on the Moors. By the end of January the navy captains were able to report that the mole was ruined and destroyed, the harbour filled with stone and rubbish, and 'made unfit to receive, harbour, or protect from the weather, ships or vessels of any pirate, robber, or any enemies of the Christian faith or any other.' The delays and difficulties had been prodigious, owing to the complete miscalculations of the Cabinet, and, as Pepys tartly says, to their misguided determination to keep the secret from the proper officers of the navy and army, whereby it had been impossible to provide the expedition with the necessary stores. 'Hence I say,' he growls, 'how necessary that Ministers of State be men of general knowledge, and, among us, especially in sea matters.' His strictures were certainly not without excuse. The force was continually on the brink of starvation, and there were times when the forbearance of the Moors alone rendered food procurable.

To these and his other anxieties Lord Dartmouth had to add the depressing conviction that he was abandoning the Mediterranean to Louis. While he was breaking his heart over the destruction of the English foothold, France had attained a dominating position within the Straits.

[1] Charles Russell to Pepys, Cadiz, October 7, 1683, Smith, i. 385.

Du Quesne, by means of the newly devised bomb-ketches, or galliots as they were then called, had bombarded Algiers with a success no one had yet attained, and Toulon was more formidable than ever. 'Lord Dartmouth,' wrote Pepys, 'is mighty full of it, that the King of France designs by his late and present dealings with Algiers to make himself master of the Mediterranean, making the Turks his friends, and thereby enemies to us and others.'[1]

The mole destroyed and the harbour choked, there yet remained the more dangerous task of dismantling the fortifications on the land side and the withdrawal of the garrison. It took another month to accomplish, but it was done with consummate skill and thoroughness. Not a fort or redoubt was left standing, and yet the troops were embarked without the Moors attempting to interfere. On March 5, 1684, the fleet weighed, and Tangier ceased to be a British possession.

With it passed away the last claim of Charles's reign to distinction. For more than twenty years it had remained as a symbol of the higher aspirations which redeemed the cynical levity of his character, and through fair weather and foul he had clung to it as though to raise a real monument to his better self. As it was, he could only write upon its remains the epitaph of his hopes. 'By the King's direction,' says Burchett in concluding his account of the destruction, 'there were buried among the ruins a considerable number of crown pieces of his Majesty's coin, which haply, many centuries hence, when other memory of it shall be lost, may declare to succeeding ages that that place was once a member of the British Empire.'

So with a smile, half humorous, half cynical, Charles dismissed his failure. What more pathetic glimpse could we have of all it meant to him? With the occupation he had inaugurated an imperial tradition that bade men look beyond the limits of their narrow lives. With its abandonment he marked his inability to understand those conditions of sympathy between government and people on which alone a lasting policy of empire can be

[1] Smith, ii. 41, March 29, 1684. *Cf.* Dartmouth memorandum on this, dated December 10, 1683, *Dartmouth MSS.* p. 102.

based. With his final fall into despotism his dream faded from him. Could he but have brought himself to grasp the depth of that national sentiment on which what we now call 'Little Englandism' is based, his aspirations of empire would have received the support they deserved. The resources for which he pleaded so pathetically would have been granted in abundance, and Tangier would never have been abandoned. England, in retaining her hold upon the Mediterranean, would have kept the dominating position in Europe which Cromwell had made for her, and which Charles believed he could enhance.

His hope was no mere indolent fancy. He was a true sea-king, and intuitively understood, perhaps better than any of his councillors, all that the commerce of the Straits meant for the expression of his sea power. 'He has knowledge of many things,' wrote Burnet, 'chiefly in all naval affairs. Even in the architecture of ships he judges as critically as any of the trade can do, and knows the smallest things belonging to it.' Pepys, than whom there was no better judge, could write of him in his most private memoranda, as a king 'who best understands the business of the sea of any Prince the world ever had,' and assures us that 'his Majesty possessed a transcendent mastery of all maritime knowledge.'[1] In the times of his deepest desperation at the intractability of his Parliament, it was always for his fleet and for Tangier that he pleaded most humbly. Never, except in Cromwell's best years, had the navy been so well administered as during his reign, never had the fleet been so intrinsically powerful, and never before had a regular naval station been established beyond the Narrow Seas. If Charles failed it was because he came to believe the fallacy that a strong imperial government can only rest on despotism. Abroad it may be so. For men of British race it is untrue. The ruins of the Tangier mole and Charles's buried coins bear witness of the truth, and there they still rest as Dartmouth left them to remind the world of the English King who tried to build an empire on the sands.

[1] Foxcroft, *Supplement to Burnet's History*, p. 48, and Tanner, *Eng. Hist. Review*, xii. 19.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE NAVAL STRATEGY OF WILLIAM III.

IT is a curious fact, the significance of which it would be as wrong to ignore as to exaggerate, that the period during which England abandoned the Mediterranean coincides exactly with the zenith of Louis XIV.'s power. Within six months from the lowering of the British flag at Tangier, the truce of Ratisbon was signed, which confirmed to France her hold upon the Empire, and is usually taken as marking the culmination of Louis's triumphs. Within a year of the reappearance of a British fleet within the Straits, Namur capitulated, and Louis was facing the first of that series of reverses which brought his empire about his ears.

In dealing with European history from one aspect, nothing is easier than to lose our sense of proportion, to exaggerate the importance of our particular point of view. We have now traced, step by step for nearly a century, the remarkable phenomena that accompanied the interference of the two Northern sea powers in the Mediterranean. We have seen how constantly that interference or its removal seemed to shift the whole action of the stage. We have now to witness the last act of our drama, when those two powers were joined in one, and after ineffectual efforts to baffle the ambitions of France they at last threw the mass of their strength into the Mediterranean and immediately saw the gigantic system of the enemy begin to totter. Many were the forces at work, and in watching the one that turned the scale we must never for a moment forget it was part of a whole. Still it would be hard to say that any other part was so powerful, and for that very reason we must be on our guard not to

place it too high. With this warning we may safely set out to trace the last phase of the epic to that resounding catastrophe which finally fixed the position of England as a great power in Europe.

For a time it seemed that the evacuation of Tangier had definitely arrested the development of British naval power. Charles II. did not survive the loss of his most cherished possession a year, and the accession of his brother made England internationally more than ever a dependency of France. In Germany the Emperor formed the famous League of Augsburg to curb Louis's further aggression. But with the British power neutralised it could barely restrain his advance, and still less break his hold. It was not till the accession of William restored England to the European system that anything could be done. By us that far-reaching event has come to be regarded as a purely domestic revolution. To William himself and to all the rest of Europe it was a stroke of international politics that brought the wealth and the fleets of the two great Protestant powers into line against France, and it is in this aspect that it concerns us here.

England was immediately plunged into the war of the League of Augsburg, and Louis found himself confronted with almost the whole of Europe. Although the British sea power was the real life of the new coalition, it was not for some time that it was able to assert itself. During the first years of the war we can discern no trace of the further development in naval strategy which we have been following from early Stuart times. Louis's splendid organisation enabled him to take the initiative, and William's fleet was kept busy in trying to obtain the command of the Narrow Seas in order to secure the English coasts from invasion and to recover Ireland from James and his French allies. The break in our naval history had been so complete that it seemed to go back a century, and as it were recapitulate itself. It is more than doubtful whether William perceived the true direction in which our naval policy had been gradually drawn, until the recapitulation brought him by experience to the point where Charles II. had been forced

to break it off. We seem at first to go back to the almost mediæval strategy of the wars of Henry VIII. No attempt was made to strike a real blow at France in the main seat of her power. Action towards the Mediterranean was quite subsidiary. It was confined to ill-conceived attempts to prevent squadrons from Toulon passing to Brest, and to protect the Levant trade. Both were unsuccessful. Tourville's victory off Beachy Head marks the one failure; his swoop upon the great Smyrna convoy the other. Even after Russell's victory off La Hogue had given William the command, it was only used in the old way. The fleet was mainly employed in attacks on the French Channel ports, and in raids upon the coasts, which had no higher object than that of crippling the action of privateers and confusing the strategy of the French armies by diversions.

For William as for Henry VIII. the war was at first a military war, and the fleet was kept subsidiary to the military operations. So soon as he had secured the command of the Narrow Seas, and had recovered Ireland, he naturally flung himself into the old cockpit in the Low Countries, which to a soldier seemed clearly the key of the situation, and it was not till the fifth year of the war that a radical change in Louis's strategy opened William's eyes to his real power. Then there was something Napoleonic in the rapidity and completeness with which he grasped the new idea and changed his front. It has been the accepted view that it was his tastes and limitations that had made the war mainly military, that he was a man who could only see war with a soldier's eye, and was incapable of viewing the great contest as a whole, in which the sea must play its inevitable part. It is difficult, however, to see how this censure can survive a study of the conditions under which he resumed the broken thread of English action in the Mediterranean.

When, in the autumn of 1693, William returned from his defeat at Landen to meet his British Parliament, it was to find the air heavy with the disaster that had overtaken the Smyrna fleet. During the spring the whole North Sea, Baltic, and British trade, that was

bound for the Mediterranean and the southward, had assembled in the Channel, waiting to get safely past Brest. British, Dutch, German, and other vessels numbered nearly four hundred sail, and the protection of this huge convoy was assigned to the main fleet, then commanded jointly by the Tory admirals, Killigrew, Delaval, and Shovell, who had ousted Russell after La Hogue. Their orders were to escort it to a safe distance beyond Brest, and then detach Sir George Rooke, who had just received his knighthood, with the British and Dutch Mediterranean divisions to take it on. Having gone some fifty leagues beyond the point of danger, the admirals considered their duty done, and parted company with Rooke and the convoy. Unfortunately, they had not taken sufficient care to ascertain whether Tourville was still in Brest. The port was so well screened by cruisers, as they afterwards explained, that it could only be reconnoitred by a squadron. Why they did not use a squadron was never explained. The result was that when Rooke reached Cape St. Vincent on his way to his rendezvous at Cadiz, his scout vessels discovered that there was an enemy's force of unknown strength in Lagos Bay, on the south coast of Portugal. He himself was for holding back till he found out what it was; but Van der Goes, his Dutch colleague, protested that if they stopped for every little squadron they got in contact with they would never finish the voyage. Besides, the wind was fair and they could certainly run through anything that was likely to be in front of them. Rooke gave way, and the whole fleet stood into the bay.

Some French vessels that were seen at anchor at once cut their cables and ran, setting fire to the store ships that were too slow to escape. This, and some false information given by two French naval officers who were taken prisoners, confirmed the impression that what was in front of them was merely a small squadron hurrying from Brest into the Mediterranean. As a matter of fact it was Tourville himself, with the whole Brest fleet of seventy of the line. Though the prisoners asserted that the hurried retreat which deceived Rooke was due to the

belief that his force was the British main fleet, Tourville was and is still believed to have cunningly devised the whole scene in order to draw Rooke into his meshes.

In any case it had the desired effect. Next day, as the allies held on for Cadiz, they found themselves in the presence of the whole French fleet. Rooke—so he says—was for fighting and sacrificing his squadron for the convoy. Van der Goes was against it, advising flight; and in face of the Dutch admiral's protests Rooke did not feel justified in persisting in his desperate course. Seeing how completely they had been entrapped the flight was managed with considerable success. Tourville, being far to leeward, had launched his light division in general chase to take hold of the allies' rear till he could get up. Rooke and his colleague, however, by a bold show of fight, frightened the officer in command of the chasing squadron into forming line of battle, and the result was that three-fourths of the convoy and the whole of Rooke's division escaped. The loss fell principally on the Germans and Dutch, not more than five-and-twenty English vessels being taken, and some of the richest of those only because they took a line of their own and were caught afterwards in Gibraltar and other Spanish ports. Still, the loss was bad enough, and the shock which the sense of insecurity produced in London was very severe. On no point was the Exchange more sensitive than on the 'Smyrna fleet,' as it was called, from what was then the chief Levant port; and to think that the costly navy, for which they had to sacrifice so much, could not protect it pointed to a piece of incompetence that was not easy to forgive.

Nor had William anything to show against the French success. Although, during his defeat at Landen, he had inflicted such loss on his enemy and so skilfully retrieved his position afterwards that they gained little or nothing by the victory, yet everywhere else the campaign had added to the lustre of Louis's arms and diminished the hopes of the allies. On the German side the quarrels of the members of the League and the successes of the Turks had enabled him to more than hold his own. On the Italian frontier, where the Duke of Savoy, in the

pay of England and Holland, was on guard between the Gulf of Genoa and the Alps, the French Marshal Catinat had won a decisive victory, and laid open the way into Piedmont, while over against him the Duc de Noailles had forced his way into Catalonia and seized the fortress port of Rosas in the Gulf of Lions. Thus not only was Louis in a fair way to secure in the next campaign the focal point on which the cohesion of the Hapsburg system had always depended, but he had also a base through which the invasion of Spain could be nourished from Toulon and Marseilles. Louis, who was beginning to feel severely the exhaustion of his titanic struggle, immediately recognised the value of what he had gained for relieving the unendurable strain. By vigorously pushing his advantages he saw he might force Savoy and Spain out of the alliance, and, with his rear thus secured, he would be able to throw the whole weight of his power against William and the Empire. So fickle was Savoy, and so faint the Spaniard, that success was certain if only he could control his own portion of the Mediterranean, and so once more the struggle for European dominion swung back to the old centre.

After Tourville's brilliant exploit on the Smyrna convoy with the Brest squadron, he had passed on into the Mediterranean, and towards the end of the summer of 1693 he and D'Estrées were in Toulon with a fleet such as had never been seen before within the Straits. It consisted of ninety-three sail of the line and sixty of the lower rates, representing nearly the whole naval force of France which had survived Russell's victory at La Hogue.[1] It was no wonder that William saw the need of changing his strategy. With such a force to overawe them it was impossible that the weaker Mediterranean powers could remain staunch to the Grand Alliance. It is true that Tourville with some sixty sail passed out again to Brest and Rochefort, but this was mainly to relieve the pressure in the Toulon arsenal, and was not necessarily an indication of a change in Louis's Medi-

[1] Chevalier, *Hist. de la marine française jusqu'au traité de paix de 1763*, p. 193.

terranean policy. There was every possibility that Tourville, who was busy refitting as many of the Brest squadron as the failing French finances would allow, would repeat his move as soon as he was ready for sea, and the first object of British strategy therefore was to prevent his getting back into the Mediterranean.

It was clear to every one that the campaign of 1694 was likely to be the most critical of the war, and for the allies the horizon could scarcely look blacker. Fortunately it was one of those occasions when at home the national spirit manifested itself at its best. The bungling and disasters of the past year, instead of shaking the country, had bred a sullen determination to see the thing through and stand by the man it could trust. It was the Tory ministers, not William, on whom displeasure fell. They were dismissed together with the Tory admirals. Russell was restored to the post of Commander-in-Chief, and William reopened negotiations with the Duke of Shrewsbury and the Whigs. So, though men might scold and grumble, when the King came to ask his Parliament for help, they poured treasure into his lap, and a fleet of nearly three hundred sail was able to be commissioned during the year.[1]

The 'main fleet in the Channel and for service in the Mediterranean,' as it was expressed, was originally settled at ninety-two sail, besides fire-ships, bomb-vessels, auxiliaries, and small craft.[2] This fleet included the usual Mediterranean squadron, but it must not be inferred that the estimates indicate any distinct departure from the old

[1] See the returns made to the House of Lords the following winter (*House of Lords MSS.* new series, i. 461, 467, 472 *et seq.*). The abstract shows 248 navy ships, of which 181 were rated ships, and the rest tenders and auxiliaries. There were also 23 hired ships, of which 17 were fourth and fifth rates, and the rest hospital and store-ships. Besides these there were 24 vessels building. The main fleet absorbed 93, Wheler's Mediterranean squadron 28, cruisers and convoy ships on specified stations 98, besides 14 on the northern coasts. The rest were for the most part in the West Indies or fitting in the dockyards.

[2] *Harleian MSS.* 1898, f. 32 *et seq.*, where the whole estimates and details of the various squadrons are set out. The extra vessels over and above the 'rated' ships included fire-ships, bomb-vessels or galiots, machine vessels (i.e. explosion vessels), five hospital ships, besides brigantines (oared despatch boats), and yachts.

lines of Mediterranean action. If such a departure already existed in William's mind, he seems to have kept it to himself, at least during the winter months, when he was wearily endeavouring to form his new administration, and to remove Shrewsbury's scruples about taking office. The ships intended for service in the Mediterranean were merely a cruising squadron, though stronger than usual, detached in the old manner from the main fleet for convoy duty and commerce protection. It consisted of some twenty sail of third to sixth rates, besides fire-ships and auxiliaries, under Sir Francis Wheler, and in the last days of 1693 he repaired to his station in company with a smaller Dutch squadron under Vice-Admiral Gerard Callenburgh.[1] His instructions were to convoy the Levant trade as far as Cadiz, to remain there a month to cover the home-coming of the Spanish treasure fleet if it had not already arrived, and then, after detaching a small squadron to take back the homeward-bound trade, to proceed with his convoy into the Mediterranean. On his return he was to arrange a junction with the admiral of the Spanish Armada of the Ocean, and co-operate with him for the guard of the Straits and the defence of the Spanish coasts.[2]

So far, then, there is no indication of any radical change of strategy. The combined squadron at the Straits was clearly little more than a development of the Cromwellian idea of commerce protection with a powerful cruising squadron, such as Blake had wielded in the old days. No doubt it was intended to prevent small detachments of French ships slipping out of the Atlantic ports and passing into the Mediterranean. But the main fleet was still bound to the Narrow Seas, and the chief design for frustrating a concentration at Toulon was to be the surprise and capture of Brest before Tourville could

[1] Burchett (*Transactions at Sea, 1688–1697*, p. 201) gives the squadron as 16 third rates, 7 fourths, 1 sixth, 6 fire-ships, 2 bomb-vessels, a hospital ship, and a store-ship, or 34 in all. The *Harleian MS.* gives it as it actually sailed, as 8 third rates, 6 fourths, 1 fifth, 4 sixths, and 6 fire-ships, or 25 in all.

[2] See 'Considerations touching the employment of the King's and Dutch ships in the Mediterranean and at Cadiz,' *Home Office, Admiralty*, v. 62–77, wrongly assigned to 1692. Wheler's instructions are *ibid.* f. 362, November 20, 1693, and Burchett, p. 201.

sail. Some idea there probably was that Russell should subsequently employ part of his fleet in acting with Wheler against the expected operations of the French in Catalonia, but the development of the design cannot be traced till events forced it to the front. Up till the end of March there is no indication of it in the Admiralty orders.

The tendency was even in the opposite direction. On arriving at Cadiz Wheler reported that he was very doubtful as to how far he could even protect the trade with the force at his command. The Mediterranean was said to be swarming with French cruisers and privateers. The fleet at Toulon was being fitted out with diligence, while the Spaniards had not even begun work on theirs, and could not possibly be ready for sea for three or four months.[1] The intelligence he sent home was no doubt confirmed through other channels and his orders were immediately modified. He was now directed not to enter the Straits at all, but to return to Cadiz and secure his ships there till the Spaniards were ready for sea or till he received reinforcements from home. If he hears for certain that the Toulon fleet has come out and is bound for the north, he is to return forthwith and rejoin the main fleet. But even this discretion was not long allowed him. In a few days the news of the French activity became so serious that he was ordered to return immediately.[2]

For the moment, at any rate, the idea of drastic action in the Mediterranean was given up. Following Wheler's recall Russell on the last day of March received instructions from the Admiralty to take command of ninety-three specified ships, of which forty-six were of the first three rates, nineteen fire-ships, seven bomb-vessels, four hospital ships, and four brigantines or despatch-boats, and with these and such others as might from time to time be sent to him, he is directed to 'proceed with the Dutch fleet to the westwards and do his best to harass the enemy without expecting further orders, and to protect the trade passing in and out of the

[1] *Home Office, Admiralty*, v. 366, January 19 and 29, 1694.
[2] *Ibid.* v. 378 and 382.

Channel.'[1] Not a word yet of the Mediterranean—at least publicly.

A few days, however, before these orders were issued, and while Russell's fleet was still far from ready for sea, a very serious piece of news came to increase the critical aspect of the situation. Wheler's statement of the difficulty of his position in no way indicated that he shrank from carrying out his orders, and before his recall could reach him he had already sailed for the Mediterranean with his convoy, determined to fight his way through the French cruising squadrons. As ill-luck would have it, however, he met off the mouth of the Straits a storm of exceptional fury, and mistaking Gibraltar Bay for the fairway he was cast away and lost with his flagship and a number of his squadron and convoy. His vice-admiral, Hopsonn, had been already detached with the homeward-bound trade, thus further weakening the fleet, and Callenburgh, the Dutch admiral, by virtue of his rank, succeeded to the chief command of the combined force. Rear-admiral Nevell, the remaining English flag-officer, was still for going on; but Callenburgh, in view of the expected junction of the Toulon and Brest squadrons, declared it would be madness, and Nevell was thus forced to return to Cadiz to refit, with no hope of being able to protect the trade in his charge, and still less of effectually opposing the passage of the Brest or Rochefort ships through the Straits.[2] At the same time it was known in London that D'Estrées and Tourville had left Paris for their commands at Toulon and Brest, and that Marshal de Noailles was about to take the field in Catalonia. Thus, so far from there being any prospect of interfering with the French initiative, there was every likelihood of the Straits squadron being attacked and destroyed in Cadiz.

It was clear therefore that something drastic had now to be done to save the situation in the Mediterranean;

[1] *House of Lords MSS.* (*Hist. MSS. Com.*), vol. i. (n.s.) p. 463.

[2] See Nevell's despatch dated Cadiz, May 6, 1694 (*Home Office, Admiralty*, iv.), and another from Gibraltar, March 11 (*ibid.* vii. 9). De Jonge confirms his statement that it was Callenburgh, as Commander-in-Chief, who decided to retire into Cadiz, citing his despatch to the States General, dated March 20, *Nederlandsche Zeewezen*, iv. i. 519.

and yet so behindhand were the naval preparations at home that it was not till the end of April that Russell had been able to go down to Portsmouth to hoist his flag. On him had rested the bulk of the work during the winter, and for his reward he was named, on the eve of his departure, First Lord of the Admiralty. His place at home was filled by Rooke, who, so far from being involved in the disgrace of the other Tory admirals, was given a seat on the Admiralty Commission and retained William's confidence as a naval expert throughout the rest of his reign. The instructions which Russell received at Kensington, on taking his leave, disclose the first definite conception of the new strategy. They were of the most confidential character, under the King's sign manual, and they reveal the exact stage which the project of a Mediterranean campaign had reached in William's mind. 'It being not yet known,' they run, 'in what manner the French will dispose of their fleet this summer, Admiral Russell is directed, (1) in case the French fleet is at Brest or Belle Isle, to attempt to burn or destroy it; (2) in case he hears it is at sea, to search for it, but not to go beyond the latitude of Finisterre; and (3) in case he has trustworthy information that it or part of it has gone to the Mediterranean or south of Finisterre, to follow and attack it. The Admiral is not to wait for further orders, but is to report from time to time to a Secretary of State and to the Admiralty.'[1]

The whole responsibility for the momentous step that was in contemplation was thus thrown on Russell's shoulders, and as things stood the orders filled him with misgiving. Before he reached Portsmouth, intelligence had come in that on April 12 Tourville had received orders to repair overland to Toulon 'to order affairs there,' and that, though the first and second rates at Brest were

[1] The resolution was laid before the Committee of the Council on April 10, 1694 (see Sec. Trenchard's notes, *Home Office, Admiralty*, vii. 18), and agreed to on April 19 (*ibid.* f. 33). The final orders were dated 'Kensington, April 24, 1694.' See *House of Lords MSS.* (*Hist. MSS. Com.*) vol. i. (n.s.) p. 459, where will be found the whole of the fleet orders at this time, as they were furnished to the Lords in response to their call for papers in January 1695.

laid up for the summer, a squadron of the smaller ships of the line was about to sail for the Mediterranean under Château-Rénault.[1] The French were again screening the port so well with their cruisers and privateers that certain intelligence was hard to come by. About the same time, however, a captain who had been scouting came in to report that with great difficulty he had succeeded in looking into Brest and had seen a French fleet standing to the southward.[2] Such information, combined with Tourville's departure for Provence, could only indicate that the main action of the French navy was to be developed from Toulon, and it was there with his old adversary that Russell's heart was.

Still he was bound by his orders to make sure of Brest before moving, and this was no small difficulty. At Spithead he found nothing ready for attacking a fortified port. Troops, bomb-vessels, and stores had not yet arrived, and half the fleet was not paid, and could not be moved till it was. Still, with thirty-five Dutch and English vessels that were available, he put to sea the first week in May to look into Brest; but it is clear he wished to leave it alone altogether.[3] By this time his friend the Duke of Shrewsbury had accepted office, and, though no more than Secretary of State, was in effect Prime Minister. To him Russell began to pour out his woes in a correspondence which has left us a picture of the whole episode so vivid and intimate that we still feel the feverish pulse of the time beating as it were under our touch. 'I am afraid,' he wrote from the 'Britannia' at St. Helen's, as soon as he had hoisted his flag, 'these two designs, Brest and the Straits, will hinder one another and may make neither effectual. . . . I have no very good prospect of success on Brest—that is if the ships are gone from Brest Water.'[4] This under

[1] Received April 27, *Home Office, Admiralty*, vii. 19.

[2] Captain Wright's despatch, *ibid.* vii. 31.

[3] He took 19 English and 16 Dutch ships with him, leaving behind 20 English and 7 Dutch unpaid. See list sent up by Sir C. Shovell, May 4, 1694, *Harleian MSS.* 1898, f. 33.

[4] See Coxe's *Correspondence of Charles Talbot, Duke of Shrewsbury*, p. 192, where will be found all the more secret papers relating to Russell's Mediterranean campaigns. Others are in *Buccleuch MSS.*, vol. ii.

his instructions was the main point he had to decide, and next day he weighed and stood away for Brest.

In Shrewsbury's answer the note of vagueness and indecision is still clear. 'I have long apprehended,' he wrote on May 5, 'that these two designs will interrupt and spoil one another. I am not enough instructed in what can or cannot be done at Brest to give judgment upon that matter; but I doubt if, after the resolutions have been taken for the Mediterranean and the instructions you have received thereupon, any great prejudice should happen to that service by delay, people would be apt to impute the faults to you, unless you have positive orders to warrant you in it. If you should go before Brest and find that squadron not yet gone to the Mediterranean, I suppose you will think it advisable to spend a little time if anything could be attempted upon them . . . but I cannot tell even in that case whether you might not think it reasonable to make some detachment which, joined with Neville's ships, might be in a condition to keep the Toulon squadron from giving any assistance to the besieging a Spanish seaport town, which the French in Catalonia seem to aim at. But that which I think most likely to be the case is that the Brest squadron will be gone for the Straits before you come thither, and then in my poor opinion all possible haste should be made to follow them.'

These vague counsels, which rather indicated than solved the difficulties, can only have served to increase the nervousness which Russell felt in having practically to decide the direction which the war was to take for the year. It was not long, however, before he saw his way plainly pointed out. The first week in May the King had left London, as usual, to conduct the military operations in Flanders; and the first news that greeted him was that the rumour of the Brest squadron having sailed, and sailed for the Straits, was true.[1] Whatever his hesitation before, he now came to an immediate decision. The old

[1] Cf. the information of Daniel Palot, received some time in May, saying that he had seen Château-Rénault sail for Barcelona with 23 of the line, 5 or 6 'bombardears,' and 52 sail in all. *Home Office, Admiralty*, v. 466.

tradition could bind him no longer, and, taking the whole responsibility on his own shoulders, he sat down to pen an order which should be treasured as one of the leading documents of British naval history. 'There can be no longer any doubt,' he wrote to Shrewsbury on May 14, 'that the squadron which left Brest on the 7th (n.s.) of this month has sailed for the Mediterranean after joining the ships from Rochefort, so that Admiral Russell has no time to lose in following them; and although it is not your department I am well assured you will use your endeavours to hasten his departure, and persuade him to leave to the squadron which remains in these parts the execution of the attempt on Brest.'

Political and financial difficulties had kept the King so late in England that he found himself deprived of the initiative in Flanders, and his main hope for the year was now centred on what the fleet could achieve in the Mediterranean. On that he boldly resolved to stake his all, and so with the high resolution that marks the great captains from the small, he penned his memorable order. Russell needed no persuasion to obey. The King's decision reached him when at the end of May he returned fuming from his reconnaissance to pick up the remainder of his fleet at St. Helen's. He had found Brest practically defenceless and was raging that the chance was lost for want of the troops and bomb-vessels that should have been with him. 'The delay,' he wrote in his breezy way, 'must lie where it ought, on that driveller, the General of the Ordnance.' Possibly he was right, for Henry Sidney's tenure of the office, though it procured him the earldom of Romney, is only remembered by the brilliant display of fireworks with which he greeted William's triumphant return from Namur the following year. Russell no longer believed in the practicability of surprising the place, and was only too glad to leave the attempt to a subordinate. Moreover, the news from Catalonia made him keener than ever to be away. De Noailles had already laid siege to Palamos below Rosas, and if it fell there would be nothing between the victorious French army and Barcelona. Not knowing that Noailles was even more hampered for want of

money than himself, his abiding fear was that he would be too late, and he fell to excusing himself and scolding the Treasury in the most modern fashion. 'I will not say where it stuck,' he wrote, 'but it is not hard to guess, and pranks of this kind will some time or other, besides disappointing the services designed, put you to greater hazard if not looked into; for as the navy of England is the most certain security to the country, so it is a service neglected till every petty thing is provided for.' The King was no less impatient and anxious than Russell. 'I am under great uneasiness,' he wrote to Shrewsbury on May 22, 'lest our squadron should arrive too late in the Mediterranean. If you could expedite this business by writing to Admiral Russell or by despatching the ships that remain, it would be of the utmost importance.' And again, three weeks later, 'God grant that Russell may soon arrive in the Mediterranean, as from that alone we expect success in this campaign. May God confer on us this favour!'

But Russell had needed no urging. He was already gone. So important, however, was the Brest design still considered that in the mouth of the Channel he had detached nearly half his own fleet and a number of the Dutch against it under Lord Berkeley, with Shovell as his vice-admiral, and General Tollemache in command of the troops.[1] Little as Russell thought of the enterprise, such a force, in spite of the betrayal of the design by Marlborough and others, should have achieved something better than the costly repulse that awaited it. Russell at least had done all he could for its success, and, free of the task he mistrusted, he held away southward with all speed the weather would permit. Without calling at any Spanish port, he sent in to Cadiz to summon Callenburgh

[1] Russell's mem. to Berkeley, May 29, *Home Office, Admiralty*, v. 460, and see *House of Lords MSS.* (n.s.) vol. i. p. 485. The division, which included 20 of the line and 10 fire-ships, numbered 40 sail, and with the Dutch division of 19 ships and 4 bomb vessels, 63. Russell was left with 32 of the first four rates and 53 British ships in all, of which 9 were fire-ships. Fire-ships at this time, it must be remembered, were not merely old vessels intended to be burnt in action when occasion arose. They were primarily second-class cruisers, as we should now say, and were armed, manned, and commanded like any other navy ship of their rate. Their dual function was indeed curiously like that of 'Destroyers' in a modern fleet.

and Nevell to his flag; but so baffling and stormy was the weather that it was not till July 1 that he reached his rendezvous off the mouth of the Straits. Without counting an almost worthless Spanish contingent that at last had been patched up for sea, he had now a fleet of sixty-three of the line, and a full proportion of minor rates and auxiliaries; but the long delays at starting and the tedious voyage had permitted things to reach so critical a stage that it was very doubtful whether he was not already too late.[1]

[1] De Jonge (*op. cit.* p. 521), from the Dutch official documents, gives the fleet at 75 of the line (50 to 100 guns). Of these, 41 were British, 24 Dutch, and 10 Spanish. The Dutch included four 90-gun three-deckers, and the British four first and second rates (90 to 100 guns). There were 19 fire-ships. In the *Memoirs* of Byng, who was Russell's first or flag-captain, the force is given as 64 of line, English and Dutch, and 41 Spanish of all rates. *Memoirs relating to the Lord Torrington* (*Camden Society*, 1889, ed. Prof. Laughton), p. 67. This work is a principal authority for the campaign, 'the business of the fleet,' as it says, 'passing through the first captain of the admiral, and he being esteemed as his council.'

CHAPTER XXVII

THE MAIN FLEET IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

A FEW days after Russell had left London to hoist his flag, Tourville had received orders to move out of Toulon and take up a position in Hyères Roads. In his eyes the move was strategically unsound, but after pointing out to Louis the disadvantages of the position, in case he should be attacked, he obeyed. The order was followed by a request from Noailles that he would join him at Rosas, which was to be the base of his operations against Palamos and Barcelona. Thither he accordingly moved about the middle of May, and Noailles at once took the field. Advancing to the banks of the Ter, where a miserable Spanish army was in position to bar his road to the southward, he completely defeated it on May 17. The very day of the victory, Château-Rénault with the Brest and Rochefort squadrons joined Tourville's flag. Palamos was forthwith invested by sea and land, and taken by storm before the end of the month. Gerona, the district capital, situated at the point where the great inland road to Barcelona crossed the Ter, was then attacked and reduced in less than a week with barely a show of resistance. There was now practically nothing between the victorious marshal and his objective except the insignificant fortress of Hostalrich, and Tourville's fleet had already moved down to blockade Barcelona pending the advance of the army.[1]

Such was the news that greeted the impatient British admiral. Barcelona was still safe, but in the direst danger. The French fleet, as it was reported to him,

[1] *Memoirs of the Duc de Noailles*, i. 360 *et seq.* (*Petitot*, vol. lxxi.); Stanhope, *Spain under Charles II.*

consisted of seventy sail, and was echeloned from Barcelona as far south as the Ebro, as though feeling to get contact with him. There was still time, therefore, and he was in high hope of a fight—a second La Hogue to retrieve the situation. 'I will not lose one moment's time to get at them,' he wrote to Shrewsbury, 'that if they design to stay for us, as I suppose they will, if they be the number reported, we may soon come to a deciding blow; that when all are killed that are to be killed, the rest may return home before cold weather and Michaelmas storms come in, which I apprehend for these three-deck ships.'[1] This fear, in view of what followed, must be noted. Added to the overwhelming sense of responsibility that was oppressing him, it was almost more than he could bear; nor must he be blamed for it, seeing that for the first time since Drake persuaded Howard to attempt to destroy the Spanish Armada in Coruña in 1588, the fortunes of the country were being staked on a bold offensive beyond the limits of the British Seas. 'Surely,' he wrote privately to Shrewsbury, 'a short time with a fair wind will put it to the trial, and then I may hope to be coming home again. It is a very pretty thing to be an admiral; but really I think to have three kingdoms at one's disposal after one year's fatigue at sea is not a reward to a man that can live ashore and has no ambition to be great.'

To increase his trouble the fair wind would not come. For a whole week he had to lie under Cape Espartel with a succession of fogs and easterly winds.[2] But a westerly breeze came to release him at last, and then, with a full sense of the gravity of the step that was being taken, he carried the fleet through the Straits, and the die was cast that committed British naval policy to its final shape. It is for his not too decisive victory at La Hogue that Russell is chiefly remembered in British naval annals. Yet were it not for the often spurious importance which actions give to naval movements, he would rather be

[1] He also wrote in almost identical terms to Secretary Trenchard, July *H.O. Admiralty*, v. 602, and cf. *Buccleuch MSS.*, II. i. 74.

[2] Russell to Trenchard, Cartagena, July 13, *ibid.* v. 668.

remembered as the man who first led the British main fleet into the Mediterranean.

The reason he was denied the battle which he expected, and which would have given his great movement immortality, is no less significant than the movement itself. For the French immediately met the new strategy by a parry which inaugurated the defensive line that thenceforth they were destined to take in the Mediterranean almost without interruption. It was Tourville himself who, when Louis's fleet began to be overweighted by that of William, had first adopted the characteristic naval policy of the French. By his famous 'campaign *au large*' he had shown how, by keeping a powerful fleet in being, the English could be compelled to keep their ships also together in fleets and thus leave the seas more open to the action of cruisers and privateers. From that policy he had been forced by higher orders into the disastrous day of La Hogue. His defeat was rightly rewarded by a repentant king with the baton of a Marshal of France, and his ideas now ruled supreme. In these ideas his faith remained unshaken. Louis was naturally still anxious to see his costly fleet supporting his military movements, but after the lesson of La Hogue he could no longer be persuaded to ride roughshod over Tourville's judgment. As De Noailles, therefore, was receiving the capitulation of Gerona, and was about to pursue his triumphant march to Barcelona, a letter was put into his hand from Louis, warning him that a British squadron of forty-five sail was starting for the Mediterranean. He was authorised, therefore, to take Gerona, an operation on which the Marshal had insisted as a vital preliminary to Barcelona, if he had not already done so, but on no account was he to venture further till the naval situation was more certain. The fact was that Louis, mindful of Tourville's teaching and of his original protest against leaving Toulon, had authorised him to avoid an action with Russell. Tourville did not wait for a second word. Though Russell was still far away he immediately abandoned the blockade of Barcelona, and, regardless of his colleague ashore, he hurried his fleet back to Toulon.

There was plenty of time, but he would risk nothing. The main point in his eyes that overrode all others was to preserve the fleet, and as he explained to Louis, in defence of his sudden abandonment of De Noailles, he wished to reach Toulon in time to get all his ships into its inmost basins, out of the reach of Russell's bomb-vessels before the British fleet appeared. He was convinced that when the waning of the summer should force Russell to begin his homeward voyage, there would still be time to complete the Catalonian campaign; and so it was that, when Russell entered the Straits, Tourville was hard at work with booms and batteries fortifying his fleet in Toulon.[1]

Barcelona was saved, at least for the time, and De Noailles's campaign, for which Louis had sacrificed operations everywhere else, was brought to a standstill. Still, thanks to Tourville's embarrassing caution, the situation was difficult enough for Russell. A continuance of baffling weather prevented his reaching Barcelona before the end of July. It was already time to think of returning, and Russell was at a loss how to proceed. 'I wish,' he wrote to Shrewsbury from Barcelona on August 3, 'I was able to give any hopes of success in these seas as you desire, but the French will not let me see them and I dare not venture to attack them at Toulon. By what I can inform myself the place is too strong, and a mortification or repulse would be of very ill consequence. With probable hopes of success I would venture a great deal, but the time of year obliges me not to spend much time. . . . I long to be rid of this troublesome affair. I have neither head, body, nor temper to undergo all I do. Pray God bless you and send you all you wish and desire, and that I may have the good fortune to see you at Christmas.'

However distracting were the thoughts of the harassed admiral, there was fortunately one man who saw his way with heroic clearness. William was no man to do

[1] The French despatches relating to these movements will be found in the appendix to Delarbré's *Tourville et la marine de son temps* and the *Memoirs of the Duc de Noailles*, *ubi supra*.

things by halves, and, though his admirals might falter, he himself was far from the end of his resolution. The failure at Brest and the impossibility of doing anything effective in Flanders determined him to cling at all hazards to the advantage and prestige he had gained in the Mediterranean, and towards the end of July the Council was startled by receiving from him a proposal that Russell should remain out all the winter. It was clear that if he was to winter in England he must return at once. The Mediterranean move would then sink to a mere demonstration. The moment Russell's back was turned, Tourville would put out again, and Barcelona must fall. As Shrewsbury, who was inclined to approve the idea, put the case in his answer to the King: 'The reputation your arms have gained by being master of that sea will vanish with the loss of that town in the autumn.' It was at Cadiz, he argued, the fleet should winter, and thereby secure what we now call 'interior lines.' 'There,' Shrewsbury continued, 'they would be ready to act as you should command the next year, and be in such a place as they would certainly watch the motions of the French, [so] that in case they should send a squadron into the ocean to be stronger here, a squadron of like strength should be immediately despatched from Cadiz to reinforce us also.'

The difficulty, as William knew, would be to persuade the Council and Russell to adopt the suggestion loyally. To the Council the move would naturally appear as a sacrifice of the immediate interests of England to the Dutch King's far-reaching views of continental policy; while as for the admiral it was clear his heart was no longer in his work and that he was ripe to avail himself of any technical excuse to get home again as soon as possible. As it happened, this idea had already been put before him. It was obvious at the first glance to every one in the fleet, that Spain was in no condition to resist Louis's attack single-handed, and that, unless the fleet remained to command the sea, Barcelona would be taken, and its fall would probably be followed by the reduction of the Balearic islands. To prevent the French thus

obtaining a firm hold in the western Mediterranean, 'a noble lord' in the fleet, whom we would gladly be able to identify, proposed to Russell that he should winter within the Straits. Naples, Messina, and Port Mahon were suggested, but Russell rejected them all. Naples was not well enough defended, Messina was too small, while at Port Mahon, the only possible station for so large a fleet, no provisions were to be had. But his strongest objection was a strategical one, that 'should such a strength be absent from England and Holland all the winter, the French might make themselves too strong for us in the Channel.'[1]

That Cadiz met all these objections he perhaps did not care to see; but it is only fair to say that there was certainly much excuse for his view. Tourville at least shared it, and it was on the supposition that Russell could not stay that his strategy was based. Within a very few days of the subject being broached in the English Council it was known, like everything else, to Louis. Marlborough had betrayed the Brest design, and somebody took care to betray the new one. Tourville was warned, but he replied that in his opinion the English could not possibly intend to winter in the Mediterranean, though it must be said there is a ring of apprehension in his letter that belies his expressed confidence, and tells how the possibility had come upon him with a disturbing shock.[2]

From the Council, on whom William naturally wished to throw the heavy responsibility, he could get no definite opinion at all. In days when a serious error of judgment meant in all probability a trial for high treason—and

[1] Burchett, *Transactions at Sea, 1688–1697*, p. 243, published originally in 1703, and subsequently incorporated as Book iv. in the *Naval History*, 1720. In July 1694 he was named Joint Secretary to the Admiralty, and thus becomes a first-hand authority from this time onward. He was originally a servant of Pepys, and subsequently attached himself to Russell (*Dict. Nat. Biog. sub voce*). See also Gwyn to Harley, July 7, 1694, *Welbeck MSS.* iii. 551. 'I hear this poet Southerne is giving up the Secretaryship of the Admiralty, and that Bridgman and Admiral Russell's Birket (*sic*) are to be joint secretarys in his room.' The spelling is interesting as giving the contemporary pronunciation of Burchett's name

[2] Delarbré, *Tourville*, Tourville to Louis, August 3 (n.s.), 1694.

few of them were quite clear of the taint—responsibility was a serious matter. First they summoned Rooke and his fellow Commissioners of the Admiralty to ask them whether they thought it possible to overhaul and revictual the fleet so far from home. But from the Admiralty they got no relief. The Commissioners promptly replied they could be ready to send out everything that was required for revictualling and careening the whole fleet in two months, and that there would be no difficulty about the operation provided Russell had full liberty of the Spanish ports; but they suggested that the Council should ask for the removal of the present Governor of Cadiz, who was suspected of French sympathies.[1] The ministers were thus forced to consider and give an opinion on the revolutionary proposal which William had laid upon them, and the report we have of their curious proceedings shows how heavily a movement which for us is a commonplace weighed on the spirits of the statesmen of that time.

Danby, now Marquis of Carmarthen and President of the Council, said it was too nice a point and refused to give an opinion either way; Lord Normanby was one day 'most clear and violent for the fleet's remaining' and the next as positive against it. Dorset and the Lord Steward stayed away. Shrewsbury and the rest, so far as they had not been cunning enough to conceal their opinions, were on the whole favourable, but insisted on the extreme danger of the fleet's having to depend on stores sent out across the Bay of Biscay in midwinter. If Russell could remain out till the next summer, Shrewsbury said he believed that the fleet in Toulon might be destroyed, and, even if that were impossible, the mere threat of retaining the command of the Mediterranean would probably incline the French to a reasonable peace during the winter. On one point only were they all agreed, and that was, 'that the decision ought to be left to Mr. Russell.' To make sure no responsibility should in any case rest on themselves they begged that, whatever orders the King decided

[1] Minutes of the Committee of Council, *H.O. Admiralty*, vii. July 31, Aug. 1, ff. 74, 75.

to give to Russell, he would send them under his own hand direct by way of Genoa.[1]

At such pusillanimous trifling, which was all the more marked from the candid way in which his own States General had supported his idea, the King was seriously annoyed; but still he did not shrink. 'I do not know,' he wrote on August 2, in answer to Shrewsbury's report, 'if I rightly comprehend, but it appears that the Committee are of opinion that Admiral Russell should winter at Cadiz, but dare not declare that opinion, through fear of being responsible for the event. I do wish that they had spoken more clearly on this occasion, and indeed they ought to have done, so as to prevent my being exposed to the supposition of acting solely from my own opinion. But as there is no time to deliberate, I am reduced to the necessity of coming to some determination, and I have accordingly resolved to order Admiral Russell to winter with his whole squadron at Cadiz. May God grant that this may succeed for the good of the kingdom and for the welfare of our allies.'

Even then the nervous ministers could not harden their hearts to send the admiral a positive order to remain, but, in concert with the Queen, framed one, which gave him considerable latitude to return if he thought proper.[2] It was more than the King could endure. He knew, as he told Shrewsbury, 'that wherever there is an unwillingness to do anything, reasons against it are easily found to prove that impossible which is not so in effect.' He made sure Russell would exercise the discretion allowed him by returning, and he was more than ever anxious for him to remain. He therefore sent him a peremptory order to stay, and even then could not be at rest. He poured out his heart to Heinsius, the famous Grand Pensionary of the Netherlands, to whose clear head and devotion both he and Marlborough owed so much of their success, telling him how anxious he was lest his order should not reach the fleet in time to stop it, since he was convinced that

[1] Minutes of the Committee of Council, Aug. 2, *H.O. Admiralty*, vii. 76. Trenchard to Russell, Aug. 4, *H.O. Admiralty*, v. 754. 'Yesterday,' he says, 'I received a copy of the orders he (the King) had sent.'

[2] Privy Council Minutes, Aug. 6, *Buccleuch MSS.* II. i. 111.

its wintering at Cadiz would prove the winning stroke of the game.[1] To Shrewsbury he wrote in the same strain of anxiety. 'I am under great alarms,' he said, 'lest Admiral Russell should not receive my order to continue in the Mediterranean, and the more I consider that affair the more important it appears to me. I know, from the best authority, there is nothing France so much dreads.' And finally, as a last precaution, he ordered a ship to be sent to meet Russell with orders that, even if he were already on his way home, he was to turn back.

So the momentous step was taken to adorn William's memory with one of its finest ornaments. It was he and he alone whose act it was, and his should be the undying credit. For the honour of his ungenerous ministers it must be said that, when he had once assumed the responsibility, they did all they could to support him. 'The letters,' wrote Shrewsbury to Russell, so soon as the first fiat had gone forth, 'which will come to you with this packet are of the greatest moment to yourself and England of any that perhaps ever came to your hand.' He urged him with friendly advice to remain at Cadiz, since, as he said, 'it will be very glorious to interrupt all the King of France designs this autumn in the Mediterranean, and ride the next summer master of both seas as you have done this.' He feared, so unprecedented was the order, that Russell's unruly temper would tempt him to disobey, and he warned him that, though his Majesty had gone beyond any advice the council had given, yet in his high determination the feeling of the country was with him. Presently he fell to coaxing. 'Though by your letter of the 3rd,' he wrote on August 26, 'I find you are not in a very good humour, I doubt the orders you have received since will put you in a worse. The doctrine you used to preach to me that public good ought to be considered before private ease will now come to your share to practise in a more tedious and troublesome manner than you could foresee. . . . Dear Mr. Russell, let a man who truly loves and values you prevail on you to practise submission and patience.'

[1] De Jonge, *Nederlandsche Zeewezen*, iv. i. 527, *note*, August 19–29.

Russell was wise enough to take his friend's good advice, but he consoled himself with an exaggerated pose of martyrdom, natural enough when men were accustomed to leave the seat of war each year to enjoy the winter season in London, but almost ludicrous when we remember the long vigils of Nelson and Collingwood or the service that men blithely endure to-day. 'Really,' he replied to his friend, 'I am so surprised at receiving the King's positive commands to winter with the fleet at Cadiz that I do not know whether serving six months, as I have done, a-shipboard and six months to be at Cadiz, and six months more a-shipboard, it be not better to put an end to a troublesome life as I have made it.' He expressed himself wholly opposed to the King's strategy and was certain that, if the French chose to send a squadron round to Brest, his fleet would be in no condition to oppose them. He was in despair, but resigned. 'I concluded what would be the event,' he laments, 'well knowing the King's passionate desire to have ships in these seas, without considering how reasonable it may prove to the other services. He fancies the defects of a ship are as easily repaired as mending a bridle or stirrup leather.'

It must not be supposed, however, that in spite of his lamentations Russell did not loyally carry out his orders. When they reached him he was already on his way home. Seeing the hopeless condition of the Spanish army and the limited time at his disposal, he had found it impossible to assist the Spanish commander-in-chief in any of his proposals for the recovery of the ground which De Noailles had won, and towards the end of August he found the state of his stores made it imperative that he should move down to repass the Straits. Neither of the orders which William had sent overland through Genoa had reached him. Both had been intercepted by French cruisers between Genoa and Marseilles, and so sure was Tourville that Russell could not dare to remain out all the winter that he believed the orders were meant to be intercepted as a ruse of William's to deceive him.[1] So Russell had sailed with the pleasant prospect

[1] Delarbré, *Tourville*, *Appendix*, Sept. 6–16.

of a winter season in London, and he had reached as far as Malaga, ready to pass out of the Straits, before he was disillusioned. There the vessel sent to intercept him met the fleet, and he received under 'the sign manual and royal signet' William's peremptory commands.[1]

The effect upon him we have already seen in his letter to Shrewsbury. To the Secretary of the Council he expressed himself no less pathetically. To do him justice his first complaint was that he had not been told in time, so that he might have stayed longer off Catalonia and effected something against the French. In his mortification he then suggested he should be relieved. The strain was too great for him. 'Could I have imagined,' he wrote, 'this expedition would have been detained here so long, I would much rather have chosen to live on bread and water. . . . The business of the conducting part is so terrible . . . that I am at present under a doubt with myself whether it is not better to die.' Still he did not flinch from the task laid upon him. He immediately called a council of war. Callenburgh was for carrying on to Cadiz there and then; but Russell says he thought the idea 'so preposterous a proceeding' that he persuaded him to go back at least as high as Alicante. He himself was for going to Minorca, but the Dutch officers would not go without the stores they were expecting. So it was settled, Russell declaring he did not mean to go to Cadiz till October, unless he was sure the French had disarmed their fleet.[2]

The intention of his movement back to the Balearic islands was to foil an expected attempt by Tourville to slip past him out of the Straits, and to this end he forthwith detached Nevell with a squadron of ten sail to cruise between Formentara and the African coast, and at the same time sent away intelligence vessels to Minorca, Oran, and Tetuan to make sure the French should not escape his cruising squadron undetected. Before, however, he himself could do anything with the main body of the fleet he was struck down by dysentery and had to go

[1] The order was dated Aug. 7, *Torrington Memoirs*, p. 70.

[2] Russell to Trenchard, Malaga, September 5, *Home Office, Admiralty*, v. 924.

ashore at Alicante. He had just strength left, he says, to sign an order to his vice-admiral, Aylmer, to take command of the fleet and do whatever the council of war decided.[1] It was resolved to join Nevell at once with the bulk of the fleet and to fight or pursue any French ships they found at sea. In this posture the fleet was kept till Russell was recovered. By that time his intelligence and the advanced season made it fairly certain that the French were fixed at Toulon for the winter, and accordingly in the first week in October, as he had intended, he carried the whole fleet round to Cadiz.[2]

Even then Russell was not left in peace. Louis, habituated to unhalting success, was exasperated with the failure of his campaign, and directly it was known that the allied fleet had left the Mediterranean he began pressing the Duc de Noailles and Tourville with desperate orders to renew the attempt at Barcelona. Unpaid and inactive, Noailles's army had become hopelessly demoralised by plunder, and he protested that, even if they were fit to march, unless the fleet could support them, the move would only be sending them to destruction. Tourville no less energetically represented the unwisdom of exposing the fleet in any such hazardous attempt. Still the effect of Louis's pressure was continual alarms from Barcelona that Noailles was moving and Tourville at sea. In spite of the excitement of the Spanish officials, Russell refused to believe the rumours, but nevertheless held the bulk of the fleet in constant readiness to re-enter the Straits. It is said that Tourville actually sailed from Toulon in October with a large body of troops for Barcelona, but was

[1] Russell to Trenchard, Alicante, Sept. 21, *H.O. Admiralty*, v. 1056.

[2] Burchett, who was Russell's secretary, says Aylmer was ordered out for a week, and returned to Alicante, September 10, which would imply that Russell left the sea open during all the rest of September. Burchett's date however is clearly a misreading. Russell did not acknowledge William's orders at Malaga till September 7–17, and did not announce his illness at Alicante and Aylmer's sailing till the 21st. Burchett also had dysentery and went ashore with his chief. Byng says Nevell was detached on September 10 and that Aylmer started for his cruise on the 13th, was joined by Nevell on the 22nd, and returned on the 23rd, *Torrington Memoirs*, p. 70.

promptly recalled again on news that Russell was coming back.[1] After that there was no sign of movement. Keeping a squadron of cruisers always in the Straits and the bulk of his fleet in continual readiness for sea, Russell set to work to refit piecemeal for the next year's campaign, and winter settled down to seal William's triumphant move.

The effect had been extraordinary. While William had been able to score his first success in Flanders by the capture of Huy, the French had made no progress in Italy, and the Duke of Savoy had held firm to the Allies. Noailles's army never recovered the demoralisation of its inactivity. Degenerating more and more in their efforts to support themselves by marauding, they fell into excesses which brought upon them all the terrors of a guerilla war, and the exasperated Catalans, of whom Louis had hoped to make loyal subjects, were driven to fierce and successful retaliation. At Toulon things were little better. Its resources were not equal to refitting the whole fleet, and the only hope of breaking William's hold on the Mediterranean was to commission the first and second rates that had been laid up in Brest, and man them from Tourville's spent ships Large numbers of seamen were sent for the purpose overland to Brest. On the way they deserted in hundreds; they could never be gathered again, and Louis's fleet never recovered the blow. And all this was directly the result of an enemy dominating the Mediterranean and keeping a fleet interposed between the two seats of the French maritime power.

The effect on Louis's prestige was even more severe. His career of conquest was checked, the panic in Spain allayed, and the wisest diplomatists in Europe began to be sensible of a new development in international politics in what the Venetian Ambassador at Madrid called 'the unprecedented and grand resolve to place and maintain

[1] *Memoirs of De Noailles*, p. 395. Russell believed it was a design to draw him from Cadiz and permit Tourville to escape. Coxe, *Shrewsbury Correspondence*, 209.

the fleet at the Straits.'[1] In England it was thoroughly appreciated. 'The resolution,' wrote Shrewsbury to Russell, 'of the fleet's wintering at Cadiz was not only met with general applause in Christendom and extremely disappointed the French designs, but it is approved here by almost all sorts of people, as the only step that has been made by us this war that looks like a vigour and a mind to put an end to it. . . . I cannot think but that you are at this time in much the considerablest station of any subject in Europe.'[2] After a full inquiry into the conduct of the war at sea, the House of Lords voted their thanks to Russell, and a resolution was also carried approving the King's strategy and begging him to increase his fleet so as to enable him to keep a force superior to that of the enemy permanently in the Mediterranean.[3]

Everything was expected from the coming campaign. Rooke and his brother Commissioners were as good as their word, and sent out all the stores, artificers, and officials that were necessary to turn Cadiz into a British navy yard. The whole 'terrible business of the conducting part' was taken off the admiral's hands and he had leisure to think. The result was a clear warning to the Government that the expected success depended entirely on his being able to bring the French to action and defeating them. If Tourville refused to put to sea, the situation of the past year would recur. At the end of July he would have to turn homeward and leave the Mediterranean open to the operations of the Toulon squadron. He therefore urged that the Channel division of the main fleet should be given sealed orders to be opened towards the end of summer, directing it to proceed to Cadiz. At the same time his own fleet would slip away, and, before

[1] 'L' insolita e grande risoluzione di mettere e fermar la flota allo Stretto serve a raddolcire gli animi,' &c. *Relazioni Venete, Spagna*, ii. 597.

[2] This, no doubt, was partly in answer to Russell's request for a commission as general, 'for admiral in Spain,' he complained, 'is squire in England, so insignificant a name is it in these parts. It is not a new thing. Lord Sandwich, Black Dean, and several others had it,' Coxe, 209. The commission was granted him, *ibid.* 224.

[3] *Lords Journals*, xv. 511.

the French could know what was going on, the fresh force would have changed places with the stale one. In this way the situation might be held for a second winter, and, unless it was so held, there was no certain hope of success. In reply he was told the King generally approved his plan, though, as his own division of the main fleet was so much larger than that he had left behind, it would be impossible to replace the whole of it, and some of the ships would have to remain. In any case it was the King's flattering desire that he himself should continue in command. Russell excused himself on the ground of his health, and then set to work to show his zeal.

By April, though he had kept squadrons out even far up the Straits all the winter, the whole fleet was ready for sea. Some eighteen sail he had sent home by the King's orders. In their place he had asked for some bomb-vessels as well as three regiments of foot, and one of the new marines to fill up his complements and furnish a landing force. These had now arrived, and on May 2 he put to sea with forty-five of the line, Dutch and English. The meaning of the new additions to his force was that he meant to break the deadlock by striking a direct blow against Toulon or Marseilles. By that device he hoped to drive Tourville out of his astute strategy and compel him to fight. In order to keep his own troops for the operation his first object was to fetch a Spanish force, which had assembled at Finale, near Genoa, to secure Catalonia against the remnants of De Noailles's army.

Accordingly, after showing himself at Barcelona and communicating with the Spanish Viceroy, he passed on to the eastward. The trouble was that the practicability of Russell's design depended wholly on the possibility of inducing the Duke of Savoy to co-operate. British interests at Turin, his capital, were in the hands of the famous Massue de Ruvigny, Deputy-General of the Huguenots, one of the many valuable subjects whom the revocation of the edict of Nantes had given to William. His mother was a Russell, and he was now a British subject and Earl of Galway for his services

as a general of horse in Ireland. In Savoy he commanded the subsidised contingent and was also Envoy Extraordinary. To him Russell now addressed a letter to inquire if there was any hope of inducing the artful prince to co-operate with him in his grand design. Having looked into Toulon and found all quiet, he was content to despatch Nevell with a small squadron to deliver his letters and fetch the troops from Finale, giving him a rendezvous at Hyères. In the interval he despatched Admiral Mitchell with the chief military officers and Sir Martin Beckman, of Tangier fame and now one of the leading British engineers, to make a close reconnaissance of the Toulon defences.[1] Then his plans were suddenly upset. A gale sprang up, which blew for three days and nights, and drove him clean off the coast; and by the time he was able to get back to cover the passage of the Finale transports past Toulon he had to run to Sardinia for water and to protect the homeward-bound Smyrna fleet.

Before he was again ready for action, Casale, the immediate objective of the operations of the Duke of Savoy and his Imperial allies, had fallen. With scarcely a show of resistance it had suddenly capitulated—so suddenly indeed that Galway suspected all was not right. The astute Duke was clever enough, however, to allay all suspicion, and no one could yet tell what was in the wind. As a matter of fact Louis had recognised that William's move in the Mediterranean had beaten him, and the sacrifice of Casale was the first step in a new opening to detach Savoy from the League and remove Italy from the board. Ignorant of all this subtilty, Russell only saw in the allies' success fresh hope of carrying off his great combined move against Toulon, and so finally crushing the French sea power in the Mediterranean. Having seen the Smyrna convoy safe for Alicante, he proceeded with his fleet to Barcelona. It was here, about the middle of July, that he heard the news of Savoy's success, and he was about to sail for the coast of

[1] In *Torrington Memoirs*, p. 73, it is said they were sent 'to view Marseilles.' Burchett says Toulon.

Provence in high expectation when letters reached him from home that again raised his ugly temper to boiling point.

William had once more taken a high hand with the navy. Disregarding Russell's plan, or knowing perhaps that it was now impracticable, he had bluntly decided that he must remain in the Mediterranean till the autumn. For the King it was the only way in which Tourville's defensive strategy could be met. All he did to meet the seamen's objections, was to say that if a few of the ships were unfit to keep the sea so late, they might be sent home, and Rooke must replace them. In vain the ministers protested, and, fortified with Rooke's opinion, urged that by that time the condition of the ships would be such as to render them unfit to face equinoctial weather. 'Not one but every seaman,' Shrewsbury wrote to the King, 'that any of us have discoursed with, do not only say the hazard is very great, but almost certain; that ships of the first or second rate have not till very lately been ventured to those seas, and if they are to return in the winter, Sir George Rooke's expression to me was, "It is a thousand to one several of them miscarry."' The King would not listen. Having failed to penetrate the French lines in Flanders, he had just made his bold move on Namur, and had sat down before the place in form. The risk he was taking must have made those which he was forcing on Russell seem light, and the orders went forward as he had resolved.

On receipt of them Russell delivered his temper once more in a letter to his friend at Court. After representing the madness of his orders he fell to abusing the Dutch squadron, which was never up to strength and always short of victuals, and roundly accused the King of being under the thumb of the Admiralty of Amsterdam. He begged sarcastically to be informed at least what force was coming in September and who was to command it. 'For at present,' he said, 'I know nothing but that after that month I may be drowned in coming home.' The end he hinted would probably be another order that he himself was to stay out, and if it came he plainly said he

should disobey it. This letter he had the recklessness to send through France, regardless in his temper of the possibility of its being intercepted. As a matter of fact it reached the King's camp in Flanders, and William opened it, but there is no trace of his ever having visited the indiscretion, if it was no worse, on his testy servant's head.

Again, having vented his spleen, Russell obeyed, and still further reduced his force by sending home his most defective ships as convoy for the Smyrna fleet. The only consolation for the angry admiral was that there was still hope of solving the situation by a stroke against Toulon or Marseilles in concert with the troops of Savoy, if only he could induce the Viceroy of Catalonia to lend him his squadron of twelve galleys.[1] On this exploit his heart was still set; but to add to his irritation the Viceroy met his application for the galleys by an application that he would first assist him in recovering Palamos. Seeing what his instructions were, and how badly he wanted the galleys, he could scarcely refuse. But, as the Spaniards had no material for a siege, he thought himself justified in stipulating that his troops should be landed for a week only, and not so long if danger threatened from Toulon in the meantime. Early in August therefore the troops were landed at Palamos, and a vessel sent to watch Toulon. Combined operations were opened immediately, and were meeting with unexpected success, when Russell's advice boat returned with two prisoners who asserted that at Toulon sixty sail of the line were lying in the road ready for sea. At the same time five fresh Dutch ships joined from Cadiz. Russell insisted on immediately re-embarking his troops, and, advising the Spaniards to return to their previous position, he sailed off in search of the French. He was in high hope that he had gained his end. He thought that the news of his having sent home his unseaworthy ships must have induced the French to come out and fight; but the intelligence was false. At Toulon, it is true, he found indications that the ships were being prepared for sea, but, after hanging as close in to

[1] *Torrington Memoirs*, p. 74.

the port as the weather would let him, he made certain they had no more intention of fighting him than before. As for his darling project of an attack upon the place in force, he had now to learn there was no hope of help from Savoy, and for his own force it was far too strong. In any case September on that coast was no place for such a fleet as his, and he once more retired to his original station at Alicante.

He had heard that Sir George Rooke was coming out with some fresh ships to relieve him, and it had been his intention to stay where he was till the end of the month in pursuance of the King's desire, or at least till he heard Rooke was at Cadiz. But Callenburgh considered that so long a delay at Alicante was incompatible with his own orders to return before the Dutch ports became icebound; whereupon Russell resolved to go home at once with all the first and second rates in accordance with William's instructions, leaving his rear-admiral, Sir David Mitchell, in command of the rest with orders to establish himself at Cadiz, and from there do all he could to protect the trade and embarrass the French.

So ended the two campaigns—the type of so many that were to succeed them. How often were their main features to recur! The French fleet helpless in Toulon—not blockaded, but refusing to stir; the fitful operations on the Spanish coast hampering in greater or less degree the military operations of the French army; the fruitless efforts to achieve something on the coast of Provence by the help of preoccupied or faint-hearted allies. Nor was this the whole. As always, beneath the apparent failures and disappointments there was still, unseen and almost unnoticed, the silent pressure of the chafing fleet that was felt to the farthest borders of the war, even to the far-off Meuse, withering the lilies on the walls of Namur.

In truth, Russell's fleet had been eating into the roots of France, and William showed no sign of loosing his hold. Sir George Rooke reached Cadiz after a tempestuous voyage of five weeks in the middle of October, and with Mitchell's and the Dutch squadron could show a force of

thirty ships of the line, besides bomb-vessels and others. It was of course insufficient to deal with the Toulon fleet, but reinforcements were being brought forward in England which were to join his flag during the winter for an early campaign in the spring. Louis saw himself threatened with a continuance of the exhausting situation. At all costs the tension must be broken, and he set to work to effect it in his grand manner with one of those broad strokes that are the fascination of his epoch. A century later the greatest of his successors found himself forced by the same pressure to attempt the invasion of England. In this Napoleon was but repeating Louis's expedient. In mid-winter, while the bulk of the British fleet was in harbour, a force was rapidly concentrated at Calais, where James joined it, prepared to throw himself across while the seas were clear, and put himself at the head of all that was Jacobite and reactionary in his lost kingdom. The design promised all success. It happened however that a continuance of westerly winds had prevented the sailing of the last division of the Mediterranean fleet It was at once ordered to the Downs with every available ship that could be got out of harbour. Russell in person went down to command, and Rooke was recalled. The situation in the Narrow Seas was saved, but that in the Mediterranean was lost. James returned to his hopeless exile, and the Toulon fleet put to sea. Every effort was made to prevent its getting into Brest, and although after many delays Rooke early in May was able to get off Ushant with a sufficient fleet, he was just too late. Château-Rénault was safe in Brest, and William's Mediterranean venture came to an end.

The financial crisis through which England was passing made it impossible to renew the strategy which had promised so well. Still its effects continued. The dislocation of French finance and of the naval administration which had been caused by William's two years' command of the Mediterranean left its mark. Though the fleet was concentrated at Brest, it was in no condition to effect anything, nor for the rest of the war did French action rise above commerce destruction and colonial raids.

Every one except Spain, whose impotence had been the cause of all the trouble, was anxious for peace. The absurd pretensions of the Court of Madrid were the main obstacle to its conclusion, and, even had William been able, he was certainly unwilling to support her unreasonable attitude by again sending his fleet to the Straits.

In any case the necessity of withdrawing the fleet had been followed by events which made peace inevitable, and at the same time marked with fresh emphasis what the command of the Mediterranean meant in European affairs. If it be thought that too much weight has been adjudged to William's great move, the rebound which came immediately the pressure was removed should certainly justify what has been claimed. It was in Italy the most convincing effect is seen. 'The measure,' wrote the despairing Galway to Shrewsbury, 'which the King finds it necessary to adopt of recalling his fleet is a misfortune to our affairs in general, as the French are thus relieved from the greatest embarrassment which they have hitherto experienced.' And again, 'My lord, permit me to represent to you that the most important affair is to think of the fleet which the King would have in the Mediterranean.' And yet again, when the danger in the Channel was over: 'I am glad, my lord, that you are well convinced of the necessity of having a fleet in the Mediterranean, and I am thence induced to hope that the King will send one. The enemy have laid up the squadron which sailed from Toulon to Brest with the exception of twelve ships. So no more than twenty-five or thirty of these ships are left in the ocean in three squadrons. Why then do we keep in your seas a fleet of eighty sail and not send a squadron of twenty-five or thirty into the Mediterranean? If it should please his Majesty to order on board only two battalions, he will divert a force of the enemy equal to twenty thousand men, and change in his favour the aspect of affairs in all this country and all Italy.'

No clearer exposition of the true lines of British strategy could be desired; but it was not to be. The

Duke of Savoy, while he had the effrontery to beg for the return of the fleet, was making separate terms for himself. The surrender of Casale proved to be the firstfruits of an accommodation, by which Savoy deserted the alliance and Louis secured from Spain and the Empire the neutralisation of Italy. In view of the military impotence of the Spanish King at home, this pusillanimous arrangement was no less than a complete abandonment of the position in the Mediterranean. It was in forcing that position that William had come to see his only hope of bringing the war to a successful issue. It is small wonder then that his patience broke down. With such allies it was impossible to work, and when Louis adroitly seized the moment to offer honourable terms of peace, William insisted on their consideration. A congress, after interminable delay, assembled at Ryswick, near the Hague, but it was only to be the scene of every kind of obstruction that the pride and folly of the Hapsburgs could suggest, and the pedantic diplomacy of the time invent. Still obstruction availed the malcontents nothing. William with his fleets was master of the situation, and, driven to exasperation, he resolved to take the matter into his own hands.

A little wayside diplomacy between Lord Portland and Marshal Boufflers behind the back of the Congress quickly settled a give-and-take line for a firm peace. It amounted roughly to the *status quo ante bellum*, with the substantial addition that Louis recognised his arch-enemy as King of England. The malcontents, who had set the example of private arrangements with the common enemy, were naturally furious at seeing the tables turned. Spain, who had the least right to complain, was the loudest in her vituperation; but the mere threat that, if the war continued, no fleet from the North would again appear in the Mediterranean forced her to acquiesce. Deprived of the protection at sea which William had refused to continue, Barcelona had already fallen. At the same time came news that on the Spanish Main Cartagena had been sacked by a French squadron under Pointis,

and Spain, for all her overweening pretensions, could be under no hallucination as to what a continuance of the war would mean for her without the goodwill of the sea powers. She had no choice but to lower her note, and on September 20, 1697, peace was signed at Ryswick on the lines which William had arranged with Louis.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE SPANISH SUCCESSION

THOUGH the Congress of Ryswick gave peace to Europe, it was far from staying the struggle for the Mediterranean. It simply transferred the contest from the sea to the cabinets. The nightmare of the Spanish succession still hung over Europe. The childless King of Spain, in ever failing health, still lingered on, and any day the news of his death might blow into flame the embers which the peace had merely covered over. Every power, oppressed almost to exhaustion with financial embarrassment and the dislocation of trade, was pining for rest, and none more than France. The only possible escape from the intolerable situation was to arrange it diplomatically while the King of Spain yet lived. No sooner therefore was the peace signed than Louis set to work, and the result was the famous negotiations for the 'Partition Treaties,' which form perhaps the most extraordinary chapter in diplomatic history.

With the failure of the male line of the Spanish Hapsburgs, three claimants could show a title on the distaff side—the Dauphin, the eldest son of the Emperor, and the Electoral Prince, son of the Elector of Bavaria. The real struggle lay of course between France and Austria, who alone could hope to assert their claim to the undivided succession; but both Bourbon and Hapsburg had to face the fact that Europe would not sit down quietly while either house added the vast dominions of Spain to the possessions that already made each so formidable. Before either could hope to enjoy its prospective rights in peace, Europe must be satisfied, and since the late war Europe for this purpose meant

William. To him therefore Louis had deferentially to apply, and to beg him to say how it would please him to arrange the balance of European power.

The crux of the whole question, as it had always been in the rivalry between France and the Empire, was the command of the Mediterranean. The possession of the Spanish crown meant also of course the possession of the Spanish Indies, but it is impossible to read the correspondence of the time without seeing that this was the minor consideration. The real and recognised value of the Peninsula was that, as the powers were then ordered, it would give to its possessor the dominant place in the Mediterranean, and the Mediterranean, as William had so clearly demonstrated, was the keyboard of Europe.[1]

Accordingly, since William's recent demonstration of his power and determination to play upon it, the first necessity was to come to terms with him if the vacant succession was not to prove a bed of thorns. And at every turn of the negotiations we see that it was the freedom of the Mediterranean that was uppermost in William's mind. With Cadiz in French hands the Straits were in their hands, and his power of dividing the two seats of their maritime power was gone. Cadiz in the late war had acquired a new strategical coefficient that had never been quite clearly recognised before. Its former importance was mainly that it was the seat of the American trade of Spain and of her Oceanic sea power. But since William had had the use of it, he had demonstrated its higher value to be that it commanded the Straits. As no first-class naval port then existed in the Straits themselves, it stood in fact for what Gibraltar stands for to-day. Unless therefore William had the liberty of it, or of an equivalent, it would be impossible for him in a future struggle to repeat the masterly stroke which had brought home to Louis the length of his arm. In the negotiations all this was of course expressed in terms of trade—it was

[1] Grimblot, *Letters of William III. and Louis XIV. and of their Ministers, 1697–1700.*

for the freedom of his Mediterranean trade that William evinced his main anxiety—but behind it, and scarcely disguised, was the higher strategy of war.

Louis's overtures began by pointing out the extreme danger of reviving the domination of Charles V. if the Spanish dominions and the Empire were to become reunited in the Austrian Hapsburgs. To avoid such an accumulation of territory round one throne, he was prepared, if William supported the Bourbon claim, to settle the Spanish crown on the Dauphin's second son, and so secure its separation from that of France. As a further security for the trade of the maritime powers, he would be prepared to cede to William Ceuta and Oran, the remaining Spanish possessions on the African coast, for the benefit of England and Holland. To this William would not listen. He protested he had nothing to fear from Austria upon the sea, however great her empire, but that so large an addition to the French sea power as was proposed was a danger not to be borne. If Louis wished to negotiate with a view to sharing the vast inheritance, it must be on the basis of a partition between the three claimants, which would make none of them predominant. By way of a counter proposal therefore he introduced the Prince of Bavaria, the third claimant, and proposed, after various interchanges of views, that to him should go Spain and the Indies, while Louis's grandson contented himself with Naples and the Italian islands, and while Milan, Sardinia, and the Netherlands went to the Archduke Charles, the second son of the Emperor; or, in the alternative, if Louis had set his heart on Spain and the Indies, then Italy and the Netherlands must be divided between the Electoral Prince and the Archduke; but in this case—if, that is, Spain and the Indies went to a French prince—then England must insist on a guarantee for the freedom of the Mediterranean, not only by the cession of Ceuta and Oran, but also of one or two really serviceable ports within the Straits.

Louis was now more than ever disturbed. In the arrangement which William had proposed he had said

nothing about Sicily, and at Paris it was feared that he would demand the island France had coveted so long, and if not the whole, at least its naval centre, Messina. But the fact was that both Louis and William were secretly oppressed with their own internal difficulties, and were overrating each other's strength. William had really little hope of bringing Louis to any reasonable terms, or of inducing his war-weary subjects to permit him a display of force. He had no faith in negotiations that were not carried on sword in hand, and, in face of the growing anti-military spirit in England, all he could do to whet his diplomacy was to increase the usual Mediterranean squadron and beg the Dutch to do the same. The effect of the expedient was necessarily to enhance the importance of the Mediterranean demands and increase still further Louis's anxiety. Eventually William declared that the place he had in his mind within the Straits was Minorca. Portland, his ambassador in Paris, also mentioned Gibraltar, but in spite of his urgent advice William would not insist on it, thereby again displaying his remarkable strategical insight. For there is no doubt that, so long as England held Minorca, the extra advantage of Gibraltar was certainly not worth the cost and bad blood its occupation must entail. Louis, misunderstanding his opponent's apparent moderation, now took a higher tone, and declared nothing would induce him to cede a port within the Straits, since such a concession would give the mastery to the maritime power. William, in his quiet way, immediately hardened down. His irreducible minimum was the power of keeping a fleet permanently in the Mediterranean, and without Minorca or some other Spanish port it was impossible for his fleet to winter there.

In every word he wrote we see his firm grasp of the controlling factors in European politics which he had discovered, and his far-sighted appreciation of what the late war had taught. Louis, as wise as he, resisted with all his diplomatic force, but he resisted in vain. In vain he suggested that, if William were bent on a port within the Straits, he might in apportioning

Southern Italy reserve one for himself out of the Archduke's share. William would not recede an inch from the position he had taken up. He told Portland that he absolutely refused to treat at all for Louis's possession of Spain, except on the basis of the cession of Port Mahon. Then, when a renewal of the war began to look inevitable, Louis gave way. Rather than give William a footing in the Mediterranean he decided to abandon to the Electoral Prince his claim to Spain and the Indies, and to content himself with the alternative arrangement, which would give him the control of Italy. One effort he made to improve the exchange, by proposing that Milan should go to Savoy instead of to the Emperor. This idea was of course that the pliant Prince should give Savoy to France in exchange for Milan, and then Louis would control almost the whole coast of the Mediterranean from Sicily to the Pyrenees. William treated the suggestion almost as an impertinence. So incensed was he with the Duke of Savoy for the treacherous desertion which had robbed Russell's great move of complete success, that he would not permit his name to be mentioned, and Louis had to content himself with the original proposal.

Still it was much that he gained—all indeed or nearly all that France had been striving for since Mazarin's day. For besides Naples and Sicily he was to have Orbitello and the other Spanish ports on the Tuscan coasts, Elba and the adjacent islands over which so much blood had been shed, and the port and marquisate of Finale, while in return for concessions elsewhere he was also to have Guipuscoa with its famous ports of Passages and St. Sebastian. The latter concession of course in no way affected the situation within the Straits, except for the increase it gave to French naval resources. No division could well have been fairer. France gained at least half the Spanish sea power with a substantial strengthening of her position both within and without the Straits, while at the same time she gained nothing by which, as she had hoped, the Western Mediterranean would be constituted a French lake. William had re-

solutely kept the gate open, and held France back from the Spanish sphere.

The main interest of it all is as a step in the gradual solidification of the naval policy which William inaugurated. Its effect was not seen till the war was renewed. The treaty itself never came into operation. When all had been settled it was not the King of Spain that died, but the young Electoral Prince. The succession thus lay entirely between France and Austria, and William's well-framed edifice fell to the ground. Everything had to begin again from the foundations. A whole year's negotiations followed before the second partition treaty was signed; but throughout all their shifting phases Louis never once made any proposal which could give William a loophole for claiming a port in the Mediterranean. Further than this the negotiations and the final terms of the treaty do not concern us. They were indeed a mere pretence that covered the determined efforts of France and Austria to secure the whole succession by intrigue at the Court of Madrid. It was Louis who won the unsavoury game. When at last, in November 1700, the King of Spain died, it was found he had bequeathed the whole of his empire to the second son of the Dauphin, Philip Duke of Anjou.

With this fatal catastrophe the bloodstained century came to an end. So terrible was the prospect to all Europe, and so weary was the world of war, that the inevitable struggle did not at once break out. Every one shrank from striking the first blow and was absorbed in securing the strategical points with which he was most concerned. The main causes of anxiety were, firstly, the 'Barrier Fortresses' along Louis's northern frontier, which since the peace of Ryswick had been garrisoned by Dutch troops so as to secure the Spanish Netherlands as a real 'buffer state' between France and Holland; secondly, the Duchy of Milan, which gave to its possessor the command of North Italy; and finally the entrance to the Mediterranean. The naval importance of the ports in the first two areas was a tradition in European politics. That of the third was new, and the unprecedented weight

attached to it reveals the impression which William's strategy had made.

No sooner had Louis declared his intention of accepting the fatal will than he begged the Junta of Regency to take steps to secure and strengthen their ports, especially Cadiz, Port Mahon, and Gibraltar, and officers were immediately despatched for that purpose. The resident agents of the Protestant powers at once spread the alarm. 'What will become of the Protestant religion,' wrote a correspondent of the Elector of Hanover, 'and what will become of the commerce of the English and Dutch . . . if he [the King of France] has Gibraltar fortified and keeps a strong garrison there with a good squadron of galleys and ships of war? If once he is in possession of this port, it will not be difficult to seize Tangier, on which to all appearance he has had his eye for a long time past. Then, monseigneur, the Straits will be indeed closed, and what effort and cost will not England and Holland be put to to open it! . . . Would to God there were in Spain five or six of the most discreet and enlightened members of the House of Commons!'[1]

His lament was well justified. Ever since the peace of Ryswick Parliament had been doing its best to thwart William's far-sighted efforts to fortify the country against the coming danger. As the means he had taken to that end became known, the hostility of the nation increased. The partition treaty had been received with something like an outburst of indignation. The King of Spain was not yet dead when it became known, and public utterance took the high moral line that it was little short of highway robbery thus to divide the possessions of an ally. Beneath this cry William believed that he could detect its real grounds. He put it down to the ever increasing sensitiveness of the country about its Mediterranean trade. He was

[1] *Buccleuch MSS.* i. 357. The document is undated, but assigned in a note to '1701 or after.' It was certainly not after, but perhaps before. The Junta of Regency to which it refers was in power only from November 1, 1700, to February 18, 1701. It is also stated to have been written 'some weeks' after it was known in Spain that Louis had accepted the will, which would give its date about the latter part of December 1700, or at latest the early part of January 1701.

probably not far from right in believing that the opposition to his work arose from the fact that France was to have Naples and Sicily, so that, as the Levant merchants said, they would have thenceforth to go to the French Court for license to trade. He had therefore set to work to remove the difficulty by arranging an exchange whereby Louis should take Savoy and its North Italian territories, and the Duke of Savoy Naples and Sicily.[1] Louis appeared to favour the idea, but, before anything was done, Parliament met in the worst of tempers. At the very hour when the King of Spain lay dying, they had been busy forcing William to disband his army, and had left him powerless to face Louis with effect in the late negotiations. The failure of those negotiations, which was mainly due to their own want of sense, they visited on the King's head, and he in disgust had come to contemplate retiring to Holland and leaving them for ever. But suddenly a strong revulsion of feeling set in. Early in Feburary 1701 Louis by a sudden move surprised the Dutch garrisons in the Barrier Fortresses and was in practical occupation of the Spanish Netherlands. Parliament was in the act of reassembling. It met with the sound of the occupation in its ears. It was a sound which, in its traditional jealousy for the North Sea ports, Parliament could not fail to understand. At the same time, to leave no room for doubt, a new French project for keeping England busy with a Stuart invasion was disclosed, and the country's foolish mistrust of its sovereign was laid bare. The Commons promptly passed a vote of confidence in the King, and in a burst of repentance he was given *carte blanche* to negotiate a new Grand Alliance.

William was at once himself again. He asked and obtained an increase in the fleet, and made overtures for the restoration of the Barrier Fortresses. The French refused to treat, and Rooke, who through all the shifts of party politics still remained William's most trusted naval officer, was named Commander-in-Chief. Fire-breathing petitions came up from the country, and by June Parlia-

[1] Grimblot, vol. ii.

ment was unanimous for war in support of Holland and the Empire. Negotiations began at the Hague for a renewal of the Grand Alliance, and in July William, whose strength was fast failing, went over to Loo to watch them and to rest, after leaving all prepared for an outbreak of war. Indeed peace barely existed. Ten thousand British troops were already in Holland under Marlborough's command. An Imperial army under Prince Eugene of Savoy, fresh from his triumphant campaign against the Turks, had entered Northern Italy to forestall the French, and a French army under the veteran Marshal Catinat was in motion to turn them out. In Brest Château-Rénault had ready for sea a squadron which was supposed to be under orders to take possession of the Plate fleet; and, as William passed over to Holland, Rooke received his final instructions.[1]

A powerful Anglo-Dutch fleet was gathering at Spithead, and with this Rooke was to make a demonstration before Cadiz with the intention apparently of emphasising William's arguments in his characteristic manner, and even of preventing the occupation of the harbour by a French squadron. It was a threat at once to the Spanish American trade and to the French position in the Mediterranean—a spring straight at the key of the naval situation. On the Straits William's eyes were fixed as keenly as they had been throughout the late negotiations; and with good reason. Louis's designs there grew more patent every day. Within two months of the first warning a kinsman of Pepys's had visited the place by his direction and had found there two French officers already at work planning an extension of the harbour and new fortifications. 'I was well satisfied,' he wrote, 'with the sight at Gibraltar, and should have taken a step to Ceuta but for the haste I was in for my getting back in time to Madrid. . . . The Straits are much narrower than I thought, and with the addition of some forts and carrying the moles out further at Gibraltar, which two French

[1] *Rooke's Journal* (*Navy Records Society*), p. 120. The exact nature of these instructions is not known, but their tenor may be gathered from Rooke's remarks about them, *ibid.* pp. 122–123, 125, 130, 132, 135.

engineers are now actually designing, I fear the enemy will have a secure harbour there for a squadron of ships sufficient to exclude us the Straits.'[1]

Throughout the year Count Schonenberg, William's envoy at Madrid, kept sending home similar reports—how Louis had persuaded the Spaniards to denude the fortresses towards the French frontier in order to strengthen those of Andalusia, how the forces of Catalonia had been sent to Gibraltar, how Renaud, one of the leading French engineers, had come to superintend the remodelling of the defences of the Straits ports. But, unlike Pepys's correspondent, he knew the Spaniards too well not to laugh at it all, and was sure that in the end nothing would be done. In his last letters, written at the close of the year, he was able to report that Cadiz was still in no state to resist an attack, that Gibraltar was practically without fortifications or defences, and that Renaud was angrily complaining he had been sent on a fool's errand 'to build castles in Spain.'[2] With such information as this streaming home there can be little doubt of the intention of the proposed demonstration. But Rooke, whose lack of imagination must ever deny him a front place among naval commanders, did not like the idea. Thoroughly orthodox, his mind could only dwell on the risk involved. Like all English admirals of the time he was nervous about taking a first-class fleet to the southward so late in the year. The difficulty of getting it safely back into the Channel in the late autumn oppressed him, and Van Almonde the Dutch admiral agreed. All through July, while the negotiations for the Grand Alliance were going on at the Hague and the fleet was getting ready for sea, they continued to protest against the orders which British commerce approved and which William regarded as an essential backing to his diplomacy.

The negotiations themselves were conducted by Marlborough, to whom William had become reconciled

[1] J. Jackson to Pepys from Cadiz, March 25, 1701, *Hodgkin MSS.* 184.

[2] See Schonenburg's despatches, April to November, 1701, *S.P. Foreign Spain* 75.

since the Queen's death. As the King's increasing infirmities warned him that his own end was approaching, he looked for some one on whom his cloak might fall—some one who could worthily grasp and handle foreign politics with his own wide imagination. It was on Marlborough his choice had sagaciously settled, and he had taken the ambitious general with him to the Hague as plenipotentiary, that he might in good time become familiar with the intricate ropes. The pupil proved worthy of his great master, and henceforward, if we look for the hand that held the helm of British naval policy steady for the Mediterranean, we find almost always that it is Marlborough's. It was so from the first. The main idea for the moment was to endeavour to save the situation on the basis of the last partition treaty. For the Emperor William demanded Milan and the Netherlands, and for himself guarantees in the Mediterranean and the West Indies. On this Marlborough tells us he insisted—even against the jealousy and faint-heartedness of the Dutch—as the sole condition on which a peaceful settlement by a new partition treaty would be accepted in England.[1] A week after he had made this declaration the negotiations were broken off and Rooke received orders for immediate action.

The admiral's protests had had their effect. Instead of carrying the whole fleet down to the Straits he was now ordered to blockade Brest, or if he found Château-Rénault had put to sea he was, as he himself had suggested, to cruise off the mouth of the Channel and cover the trade. At the same time he was to detach a squadron of thirty-five of the lesser ships of the line, under Benbow and Sir John Munden, to the Azores to forestall the French in intercepting the Plate fleet and to 'take care of it for those who were entitled to it.' With these orders, so Elizabethan in flavour, Rooke put to sea, and, having detached Benbow, he proceeded to Brest. He found Château-Rénault had gone. A few days later, news came that the Plate fleet had been stopped at the Indies. Benbow

[1] Marlborough to Godolphin, July 22, 1701, in Coxe's *Life of Marlborough*, chap. ix.

was recalled, and Rooke in council of war decided it was time to bring the main fleet into Spithead.

The outbreak of war was thus averted. There was still hope. Marlborough had succeeded in negotiating an alliance with the Emperor and the Protestant powers, which might yet bring France to reason, when an event happened which Louis recklessly used to make all further negotiation impossible. As Marlborough's treaty was being signed, James II. died, and Louis, in defiance of the treaty of Ryswick and of the tenderest susceptibilities of English public opinion, recognised his son as King of England. The insult was unpardonable, the provocation glaring. In the height of the war fever a general election was held, and a new Parliament met, pledged and even on fire to back William against his old enemy to the utmost limit of their resources. Forty thousand troops and as many seamen were immediately voted, and the war had come at last.

From the point of view of the higher naval strategy no war has more illuminating instruction for our own time than that of the Spanish succession. In many respects the conditions and objects of naval power closely resembled those which exist to-day. It was a war to prevent the dangerous preponderance of an ambitious and powerful military state; it was also a war for the freedom of commerce; and the one element against which no continental power had an equal card to play was the British navy. During the late peace the strain of Louis's army had been too great to allow him thoroughly to re-establish his navy, while on the other hand the jealousy of a standing army, which in England had destroyed William's military resources, had not extended to the navy. Its power and efficiency had been well maintained. Ships had been kept in good condition and the peace footing settled at fifteen thousand men. Every one recognised it as the most trenchant weapon in the armoury of the alliance, but no two strategists agreed on how it could be best employed. The Emperor hoped to see it at Naples, and in the spring made a formal proposal to that end; but he was informed politely that it was too late in

the year for the great ships to go so far, as there was as yet no intermediate port available for wintering. Next year moreover he would probably be better able to co-operate, and in the meanwhile it should be disposed with a particular regard to his interests.[1] Prince Eugene, who was actively engaged with Marshal Catinat in Lombardy, more modestly desired that at least a portion of it should be sent into the Adriatic to protect his communications with Trieste, which were being threatened from Toulon. On the other hand, the Dutch and North German Princes who had joined the alliance, ignoring the lessons of the late war, would have had it operating on the north coast of France with a view to relieving by diversions the pressure on their own frontiers.

Rooke's imagination could reach no higher. In January 1702 he presented to the King his plan of campaign. A main fleet of fifty English and thirty Dutch of the line was to be formed. Its objective he does not mention, but it was certainly not for the Straits. For 'the southward' he proposed a secondary fleet of thirty English and twenty Dutch 'to go abroad with eight thousand English and Dutch soldiers to attempt something on Spain or Portugal.' The remainder of the available ships, being thirty sail of the line with frigates and smaller craft, were 'to remain at home for the security of the Channel.'[2] This appears to be little more than the vague defensive strategy of the Elizabethan Government which Drake had tried so hard to break down. William's genius had left it far behind. His extraordinary capacity for seeing the vast theatre as a whole fixed his eyes on Cadiz. His unerring judgment, no less than his experience during the late war, showed it to him as the first strategical point to make, and there in its spacious roadstead, and amidst its well-defended dockyards, he saw the true position for his naval base. All its manifold significance was clear to him. Its

[1] 'The answer to Count Wratislaw's proposal,' April 19, 1702, *H.O. Admiralty*, 10.

[2] *Rooke's Journal*, p. 144, January 10, 1702. See also *ibid.* p. 255, where the plan appears in detail, but under date by error January 10, 1703.

possession would give him the command of the Straits and the West Indian trade; it would enable him to cut in two the naval position of France, and at the same time would open a door for military and political action at the point most distant from Louis's base, and draw into his own system the life-blood of Spain.

Rooke's instructions leave little doubt as to which of these considerations was uppermost in William's mind. The true object of the expedition to Cadiz, with which the war opened, has been generally missed. It has been assumed that it meant no more than the similar expeditions that had preceded it in Elizabethan and Stuart times—that it was in fact, like them, aimed primarily at the American trade and colonies, and intended secondarily as a diversion. Its main object, however, was certainly the command of the Straits—a first step to the development of a true Mediterranean policy. This is clear from the instructions which Rooke received when war was actually declared. It was not, unfortunately, by the King's hand that they were delivered. William was dead, and Anne reigned in his stead. Still all had been settled beforehand. The only difference was that the change of the crown and a consequent change in the Admiralty led to delays that were irreparable. War was declared through the fleet on May 4. A fortnight later Prince George of Denmark, the Queen's consort, was made Lord High Admiral and Rooke Vice-Admiral of England, and it was not till June 7 that he received his official instructions. With the military force that was to accompany him he was first to endeavour to surprise and capture Cadiz. 'But in case it shall appear,' they continue, 'upon your arrival at Cadiz, that there is such a considerable garrison of disciplined troops in the town and such a squadron of ships in the bay or harbour as may render the attempt impracticable, you are then to proceed to Gibraltar, or take on your way home Vigo, Ponta Vedra, Coruña, or any other place belonging to Spain or France as shall be judged proper by a council of war.' He was further authorised to assist the military commander in holding any captured place that was tenable, and leave

there a sufficient squadron. The main idea became still clearer in the additional secret instructions which were to be communicated to no one but the Duke of Ormonde who was in command of the troops, and not even to him, as they say, 'till after the success of your undertaking at Cadiz or Gibraltar is known.' Then, and not till then, he was to detach a squadron and two thousand troops to the West Indies.[1]

These instructions must be carefully noted. It is apparently from having missed them that the highest authorities have been led to an entire misconception of William's strategy. It is almost universally said that his main object was the capture of the Spanish American colonies; that it was with this object he meant to begin by attacking Cadiz, the headquarters of the Armada of the Ocean; and that it was only by accident that the main action of the fleet was eventually in the Mediterranean. In the third year of the war, as a consequence of the adhesion of Portugal to the alliance, the Archduke Charles resolved to land at Lisbon, and thence, with the support of the Portuguese and the maritime powers, to enforce his claim by an invasion of Spain. But for this, so it is generally asserted, the allied fleets would have been primarily occupied with the West Indies. Rooke's orders, following in the direct line of William's previous naval action and his recent diplomacy, show clearly that this was not the intention. They show that, from the first, action against the West Indies was to be secondary, and that the main action of the fleet was to be directed to the dislocation of the enemy's sea power at its origin by seizing the command of the Straits and controlling the Mediterranean. That William could conceive a plan of action so advanced, and Marlborough develop it as he did, entitle them both to rank as high among naval strategists as they do in their own special art.

That Rooke was authorised, if neither Cadiz nor Gibraltar could be had, to attempt one of the more northerly ports in no way detracts from the clearness of the conception. The meaning of this was that Louis,

[1] *Home Office, Admiralty*, xiii. 3.

in his eagerness to secure his position in the Spanish seas, had succeeded in making a treaty with Portugal by which the ships of the allies were to be excluded from its ports. Lisbon could not be used as an advanced British base as it had been formerly, and it was therefore necessary, as a step to further action in the Mediterranean, to secure another port as near to the Straits as might be. Rooke's alternative orders, therefore, only confirm the determination to make the Spanish seas the centre of British naval action.

If any doubt were left, it would be removed by the instructions of the next two years, which, as we shall see, are based on the fixed idea of the main fleet acting within the Straits, before ever the Archduke was landed in Lisbon. Even then the intention of the British Government was to use the main fleet to secure for the allies the invaluable lines of Mediterranean communication, to support the war in Italy, to establish there a base for an invasion of south-eastern France, and so to cut Louis off from the sea from which he drew the bulk of his extraneous resources. From the first it was recognised that Toulon was 'the key of the situation,' and, at least in Marlborough's mind, every movement of the fleet was but a step to this goal. From his place in the House of Lords years afterwards, when the conduct of the war in Spain was under inquiry, he put the matter beyond doubt. 'My Lords,' said he, 'I had the honour of the Queen's command to treat with the Duke of Savoy about an attempt upon Toulon, which her Majesty from the beginning of this war had looked on as one of the most effectual means to finish it. Spain did not enter into the design. The war there was to be managed on its own bottom.' In other words, the invasion of Spain was, from the naval and military point of view, a mere diversion which political exigencies rendered desirable. It was the command of the Mediterranean that was the real object, and Toulon the ultimate objective; and so far from the presence of the Archduke in Spain determining the action of the fleet, the truth is from first to last it did nothing but hamper and spoil it.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE CAMPAIGN OF 1702

OWING to various causes of delay, not the least of which was the ill-advised destruction of William's standing army, it was past midsummer before the expedition was ready to sail. But, vexing as was the difficulty of procuring troops in time, there came from it a priceless boon. For it was at this time the famous corps of Royal Marines was permanently established with the view of providing the fleet with a landing force that should be always available. Experience had shown how limited was the potentiality of a fleet that had no such extension of its arm. We have seen how Cromwell's design on Gibraltar had to be abandoned for want of such a force, and the events of the coming war were to prove its value up to the hilt and lay the foundations of a regimental reputation unsurpassed in the history of warfare. Attempts to solve the problem may be traced back through the 'Maritime Regiments' of Restoration times to the 'Sea Regiments' in the Elizabethan fleets. The idea took more definite shape when at the end of 1689 William III. had raised his First and Second Regiments of Marines. But even these were intended quite as much to supply the dearth of seamen as to create a landing force. Burchett assures us that one of the principal motives in raising them was that they should be a nursery for seamen, and so soon as a marine could qualify as a foremast hand he was passed to the ship's books and his place in the regiment filled up with a recruit.[1] Burchett really understates the case. From the numerous orders issued for the regulation of the new force, and the controversy to which

[1] *Naval History*, book v. chap. ix.

it gave rise in the press, it is clear that it was based on the marine regiments of Colbert. The main idea, as in France, was to provide a standing force of trained and disciplined men who would be at hand as a nucleus for mobilisation at any moment while seamen were being collected, and who would give a better tone to the crews.

To this end two three-battalion regiments, each three thousand strong, were to be raised. Half were always to serve with the fleet and half ashore alternately. While ashore they were to be trained as soldiers and employed in the dockyards as riggers and labourers, so as to be available for equipping and transporting ships at any sudden call. Afloat they were to be trained not only in musketry, but as seamen and gunners. It is evident that no mere landing force was intended, but rather an anticipation of our present system of continuous service which was not established till the eve of the Crimean War.

Well meant as the scheme was, we can see it was too military in conception to be an entire success. It is true it had saved the situation when Russell was at Cadiz and the men had done well; but the organisation was faulty and led to much abuse. In spite of several prohibitions, numbers of sea-officers obtained commissions concurrently with their ordinary ones, and for this and other reasons the force fell into confusion and dwindled. At the end of the war an attempt was made to reorganise it in four regiments, but the suspicious antipathy to a standing army was growing irresistible, and the defenders of the force were not able to show a good enough record to overcome it. The new regiments were actually raised, but the hostility only increased, and in 1699 they were swept away in the short-sighted policy that deprived William of his army.[1]

[1] Major Edye, *History of the Royal Marine Forces*. The author rejects the idea that William's marine regiments were raised as a nursery for seamen, having, in spite of his exhaustive research, missed Burchett's direct statement on the point. The official and pamphlet evidence that he has collected gives abundant proof that Burchett was not mistaken. For further evidence of the political antipathy to the Marines, see 'A Seaman's Opinion of a Standing Army in England,' January 1699, in the *Collection of State Tracts, temp. William III.*, ii. 684.

William's attempt, it will be seen, was really aimed at providing the navy with a backbone of men trained as the bluejacket is to-day, rather than at creating a true marine force as it was afterwards understood. But whether or not such an achievement was possible in those days, the difficulty of getting troops at a pinch for Rooke's fleet abundantly emphasised the importance of a standing military force to act with the navy. No less than six regiments were raised, but they were put on a different footing from their predecessors. There was no longer any idea of their being a nursery for seamen, and the men were not allowed to pass into the working crews of the ship. They were to be and remain a purely military force paid out of the navy vote, and under the command of the Admiralty. We may well believe that one of the principal motives this time was to elude the rooted objection to a standing army, which Parliament had lately so unhappily displayed, by making the new regiments part of their beloved navy. But, however this may be, the Marines rapidly, as we shall see, asserted their own intrinsic value apart from any constitutional or political consideration. As Burchett wrote, when they had been well proved, 'experience hath shown that these regiments have been very useful, but more especially upon fitting out squadrons of ships for any immediate expedition; for as they are constantly quartered, when not at sea, as near the principal ports as possible, namely, Plymouth, Portsmouth, and Chatham, so were they with great facility put on board such ships as had most occasion for them, for they were under the immediate direction of the Admiralty.' It was not too much to say; for to their readiness and to the rapidity and length of stroke which they gave the fleet were due the two achievements which established England in the Mediterranean.

Had they been in existence at the beginning of the war there might have been a different tale to tell. Much obstruction and delay must at any rate have been got rid of, which spoiled the British initiative. Most of it came from Rooke himself. As the season advanced, his old anxieties recurred, and he began to fight shy of

taking the fleet so far as Cadiz. 'I must repeat my opinion,' he wrote to Prince George on June 1, 'that no service can balance the hazard of bringing our great ships home in the winter;' and he added that, as it was, 'the expedition was pretty much to pieces to execute this great design.' It is clear from his letters at this time that he wished nothing better than that it should remain 'in pieces' till it was too late to sail for the Straits.[1] The whole plan of campaign was opposed to the views he had expressed. It was Marlborough's, not his, and already he was finding himself displaced in the naval councils of the nation by Marlborough's brother, George Churchill, who was installed at the Admiralty as the Prince Consort's right-hand man. From the first therefore he set himself in sullen opposition to the official scheme. 'Rooke,' says Burnet, 'spoke so coldly of the design he went upon before he sailed, that those who conversed with him were apt to infer that he intended to do the enemy as little harm as possible.' The worthy Bishop had always an ill word for Rooke, and his caustic comment must be received with discretion. Still, there is no doubt Rooke was not quite loyal to his orders, and that he did everything he could to get his own plan of campaign substituted for that which Marlborough had received from William.

As it happened, an alternative presented itself. Earlier in the year Sir John Munden had been sent out to prevent a French squadron from Rochelle reaching Coruña, where the outgoing flota was awaiting its escort to Mexico. He had failed, and the two fleets had got together into Coruña. Rooke's council of war therefore decided that their best course was first to direct the force against that place, and endeavour, by combined land and sea operations, to destroy the fleets where they lay. If, on their arrival, they found them gone, they would then consider Cadiz. This plan, which, as being directed against an important fleet of the enemy, was sound enough, received the sanction of the Government; but at the same time Rooke was told

[1] *H.O. Admiralty*, xi.

that his former instructions were to stand, and that as for his anxiety about his great ships he was to run the risk of getting them home in the storm months rather than give up Cadiz, or, if that could not be done, he could leave them behind in any port he took, and stores should be sent out to refit them.[1]

An advanced squadron of twenty-two of the line, or nearly half the fleet, was sent forward under Sir Stafford Fairborne, son of the famous Governor of Tangier, to blockade Coruña till the main fleet arrived. This was Rooke's first step towards getting his own way; and as Marlborough was absent, fighting in the Low Countries, the admiral's plausible views were difficult to resist. His next move, as July came and the expedition was still at its moorings, was to induce Van Almonde, the Dutch admiral, to write to his Government impressing upon them the risk of carrying out the original programme.[2] He was further backed by Shovell, to whom was committed the task of blockading Brest and guarding the Channel in the absence of the main fleet. He complained that thirty ships of the line was a force inadequate for the purpose. The words of his protest are worth recording. 'The misfortune and vice of our country,' he wrote to the Earl of Nottingham, 'is to believe ourselves better than other men, which I take to be the reason that generally we send too small a force to execute our designs; but experience has taught me that, when men are equally inured and disciplined in war, 'tis, without a miracle, numbers that gain the victory. For both in fleets, squadrons, and single ships of nearly equal force, by the time one is beaten and ready to retreat, the other is also beaten and glad his enemy has left him. To fight, beat, and chase an enemy of the same strength I have sometimes seen, but have rarely seen at sea any victory worth the boasting, when the strength has been near equal.'[3] It was sound

[1] Hedges to Rooke, June 17, 1702, and 'Further Instructions,' July 12 (*Hatton-Finch Papers, Add. MSS.* 29591), where most of the orders and correspondence relating to this campaign are collected.

[2] *Rooke's Journal*, July 12, 1702.

[3] *Home Office, Admiralty*, xi., July 19, 1702. He repeats these views on July 28, *ibid.*

sense enough, and especially for the ears of a minister; but fortunately it was a doctrine which British admirals have been wont to honour more in the breach than the observance.

These protests and complaints were also supported by Lord Pembroke in his last words as Lord High Admiral before he resigned in favour of the Prince Consort.[1] Fortunately Churchill's growing influence over the easy-going Prince was strong and firm enough not to let Rooke off altogether. Though he was released from the necessity of attempting Gibraltar, he was held to Cadiz with the more northerly ports as alternatives if the place were found impracticable. So far from relenting, the Government had new reasons for holding him to their plan.

Owing to the demonstration which William III. had made with Benbow's and Munden's squadrons before the war broke out, it was two years since a Plate fleet had come home, and so great was the consequent financial stress in Spain that early in the year Château-Rénault with twenty-three of the Brest squadron had gone out to the West Indies to fetch it.[2] On July 14 news was received from Benbow, who was in the West Indies, that Château-Rénault with his priceless charge was about to sail for Europe. Both in England and France it was expected he would make for a French port, and from this moment the British Government became preoccupied with the determination to prevent the vast treasure falling into Louis's hands. It was decided that Shovell with an increased force should take up a station from which he could cover Brest, Rochefort, and Port Louis, and the immediate importance of Rooke's fleet was that he should close Cadiz and the adjacent ports, and so head Château-Rénault into Shovell's arms.

[1] See his protest against the Mediterranean policy, *H.O. Admiralty*, xi. and xvi., May 20, 1702.

[2] Duro, *Armada Española*, vol. vi. cap. ii. and *Appendix, Désastre en Vigo*. For Shovell's and Byng's movements see *Memoirs of Torrington*, p. 90 *et seq.* See also *Rooke's Journal* and *Life of Capt. Stephen Martin* (*Navy Records Soc.*), and Guérin, iv. 112 *et seq.*

It was this consideration, so far as we can judge, rather than Rooke's opposition that modified the original plan of campaign. His objections were met one after another with determined astuteness. As he continued to grumble about the safety of his three-deckers, Shovell was told to proceed westward immediately, and if he could come up with Rooke before he sailed he was to relieve him of his largest ships and give him in exchange an equivalent number of third rates. In this way the ground was cut from under Rooke, and at the same time Shovell's request for an increase of force would be met. But it was a solution of the situation that was little to Rooke's mind, and, finding himself outmanœuvred, he got away to sea before Shovell could reach him. It was all the Government required, and they contented themselves by sending orders after him, that, so soon as he had carried out his instructions, he could return home, leaving Shovell reinforced with ten or twelve of his best ships to intercept Château-Rénault if he had not already arrived.[1]

With these orders Rooke cleared the Channel on July 25, leaving Shovell, as we have seen, to lament his inadequate force. Rooke's fleet, including the Dutch contingent and Fairborne's squadron that was ahead of him, numbered fifty of the line, some ten frigates, about twenty bombs and fire-ships, and no less than seven hospital ships. Besides these there were fifty transports, and the whole fleet, with ordnance and store ships, amounted to nearly two hundred sail.[2] Off Finisterre he ascertained that Coruña was empty. The birds had flown before Fairborne's squadron could arrive to shut them in, and, after spending some time in finding him, Rooke held on for Cadiz. His information assured him that it was strongly garrisoned—too strongly at least to be taken by a *coup de main*. But

[1] *Hatton-Finch Papers, Add. MSS.* 29591, where are collected all the orders &c. relating to the intercepting of the Plate fleet. See also *Rooke's Journal*, July 24, p. 170, and *H.O. Admiralty*, xiii. 39, July 20.

[2] *Journal*, 160, 248. It is interesting to note that, before sailing, Rooke protested to Nottingham against his small force of frigates being further reduced, 'for,' he said, 'we have fewer cruisers than any fleet of this consequence ever had.' *H.O. Admiralty*, xi., June 15, 1702.

instead of leaving it alone, as their instructions directed, Ormonde and the Council of War decided to land and occupy the neighbouring port towns, and so reduce it by degrees. A landing was accordingly effected at Rota, on the opposite side of the bay, but not till August 15, three days after they had appeared before the place.

Had the whole force been under one capable and resolute hand, there was still no reason why Cadiz should not have been taken and held. But with the divided and inefficient counsels that disturbed the expedition success was impossible. Ormonde had neither the experience nor the character to hold it together. His second in command, Belasyse, was no better. Rooke, who disapproved the whole affair and was unwell, had taken to his bed as soon as he had cleared the Channel, and was concerned for nothing but getting his fleet safely home again.[1] Not only did soldier pull against sailor, but there was no agreement either in the army or the fleet, nor between the Dutch and the English. To make matters worse, the most capable man in the force was the representative of the Emperor, Prince George of Hesse Darmstadt, whose mission was political. As Governor of Catalonia during the late war he had endeared himself to the people and been the heart and soul of their resistance to the French after Russell had been compelled to abandon them. Under Bourbon influence he had been removed, and at the outbreak of the new war he had been sent forward to Lisbon to endeavour to persuade Portugal to desert the French and accede to the Grand Alliance. From that port, before he had achieved any success, he had joined the fleet, and was now bent on preventing any action which might alienate the Spaniards from the Hapsburg cause.

This, unhappily, it was out of his power to prevent. Aimless and undisciplined operations about Port St. Mary and the neighbouring suburbs of Cadiz ensued, in which the army demoralised itself by plunder and drink and destroyed all hope of Spanish co-operation. Though Fairborne, full of his father's spirit, was always ready

[1] See p. 483, *note*.

with some vigorous design for supporting Ormonde's proposals, he could not overcome the dead weight of Rooke's inertia, and the army could never get adequate support from the fleet. Whether from pique or because he was really ill, the admiral was still in bed, and indeed he remained there almost continually throughout the operations before Cadiz. Vice-Admiral Hopsonn, his second in command, who had to write his despatches for him, said he had gout in the hand and a touch of fever, and was 'extremely ill.'[1] In three weeks' time things had come to such a pass that it was resolved to burn the Spanish magazines which they had captured and re-embark the troops. Hopsonn began to despair of taking the place. It was too late for the fleet to attend a regular siege. 'A vigorous and severe bombardment,' he said, was the only chance. The soldiers were of the same opinion, and this method it was resolved to try. But here the Prince of Hesse stepped in. A bombardment of the first port in Spain was not calculated to increase the popularity of the Hapsburgs with the Spaniards, and Rooke found a technical excuse for abandoning the project.

There was then no thought but of home. In vain the Prince of Hesse urged them to winter in some Spanish port, and told them the Hapsburg cause was lost if they retired without effecting anything. He suggested the ports named in Rooke's commission, but Rooke got an opinion from his pilots against them all. He suggested a port within the Straits near Alicante, whence he promised he could raise the whole of Valencia, Aragon, and Catalonia against the Bourbons. Rooke's last instructions forbade him going south of Cadiz. The Prince told him plainly that he knew he had not been in earnest from the first, and all along had only been seeking an excuse to return. Rooke was unmoved, and a few days later his Council of War decided to go home in spite of the protests of Ormonde and the Dutch general.

So lame a conclusion was the last thing the home

[1] Hopsonn's despatch, August 26, *Add. MSS.* 29591. This is confirmed by a despatch of Van Almonde's to the States General, De Jonge, iv. ii. 218.

Government expected. The country was rejoicing over Marlborough's successes in the Low Countries and Eugene's hard-won victory in Italy. The capture of Cadiz—the easiest of the three main operations of the campaign—was regarded as a foregone conclusion. A week after the troops had landed the good news from Flanders was sent out to Rooke, and with it fresh orders for his further movements. It is these orders that leave no doubt as to the lines on which the war had been designed. In the despatch which brought them the Government makes a last effort to get the stubborn admiral to understand the true object of their eagerness to get hold of Cadiz. Their chief incentive was not political, but naval. As in the last war, Cadiz was to be made a base from which to control the Mediterranean and the military operations upon its shores. He was informed that a small French squadron under Forbin was harassing Prince Eugene's communication and interrupting the passage of his supplies in the Gulf of Venice. It was believed that the Comte de Toulouse, who was in command at Toulon, intended to join him for more serious operations, and Rooke was told that, so soon as Cadiz was in the hands of the allies, he was to detach a squadron of eighteen or twenty sail to the Adriatic to parry the French move. Toulouse, the Government had ascertained, had about ten ships and six galleys, and Forbin three frigates and two fire-ships.

But this was not all, or nearly all. Marlborough, regarding the fall of Cadiz as a practical certainty, was already at work preparing his further blow at the heart of the French Mediterranean power, and in the new orders is the first indication of what was in the wind. Cadiz was but a stepping-stone to Toulon, and Rooke, without any explanation, was quietly informed that he need not run the risk of bringing home his great ships before winter. The Queen intended in the next year to have a much larger fleet in the Mediterranean, and that he was therefore to refit as many ships as possible in the Cadiz yards in readiness for the next campaign.[1]

[1] *H.O. Admiralty*, xiii. 33, August 21, 1702, and *Add. MSS.* 29591, same date.

In all this we may trace with certainty Marlborough's hand. Sir David Mitchell, Russell's old flag captain and his second in command in the Mediterranean, who was now on the Lord Admiral's Council and represented in politics all that was antagonistic to Rooke, was over in Holland negotiating with the States for further naval co-operation, and Marlborough, in the midst of his arduous campaign, was guiding his hand.[1] Marlborough's unfailing readiness to assist his great rival, Eugene, is one of the brightest features in his character; but in this case it was not to be. Unless Cadiz fell, the expedition to the Adriatic was impossible. About a month later, after Hopsonn's despatch had been received with its unsatisfactory account of the admiral's health and the state of the operations, the Government resigned themselves to their disappointment and wrote patiently to both Rooke and Ormonde, bidding them, as they were not likely to succeed at Cadiz, to try something else.[2]

The truth is that at this time they were more than ever absorbed in their anxiety to intercept Château-Rénault. The old hankering after the treasure fleet in fact was beginning to distort their strategical aims as seriously as it had done those of the Elizabethans. All August intelligence of the French admiral's movements had been coming in, and it was immediately sent off to both Rooke and Shovell. Shovell, after his complaint, had been reinforced, and for the moment Cadiz was not the first consideration. The last intelligence received by the home Government assured them that Château-Rénault was after all going to try to get into Cadiz and not Brest. The main consideration therefore was to keep Rooke on the Spanish coast. The information was hurried off to him, and at the same time Shovell was given authority to stretch down as far as Finisterre to bar the way to Coruña.

Soon after writing their indulgent despatch, however, it would seem that something occurred to brace the

[1] Marlborough to Mitchell, August 14, 1702, *Despatches*, i. 18. The letter refers mainly to a West Indian expedition, but that was not Mitchell's main business. See Marlborough to Nottingham, *ibid.* p. 8.

[2] *H.O. Admiralty*, xiii. and *Add. MSS.* 29591, September 16, 1702.

Government back to their original high intention, and that at the same time they received some intimation that the real cause of the failure at Cadiz, as they had too much reason to expect, was Rooke's obstinate refusal to give to Ormonde the support that he had the right to demand. At all events their note changed, and a week later they sent him still more unwelcome orders, which were indeed not far removed from a reprimand. He was told that the Government regarded the occupation of Cadiz as a matter of the highest importance. Instead of coming home, therefore, he was to continue to support the operations of the troops and to remain out till further orders, or until the land officers agreed that further operations were useless. When the great ships could no longer keep the sea he was to send them into Lisbon and winter them there.[1]

Here then we have a firm determination of the Government, in spite of their preoccupation, to hold Rooke to the original plan of campaign, or in other words to the Mediterranean. They were beginning to lose hope of the Plate fleet. Since it had been so long in appearing they feared it must be already somewhere safe in harbour. Moreover, the effect of the fleet's being off Cadiz so long without any sign of opposition from France was that the attitude of Portugal was becoming more favourable and the prospects of the Mediterranean looked more rosy. But already, as the sharp despatch was being penned, Rooke was in the act of abandoning his position; nor, when the proposal to winter in Lisbon reached him direct from Methuen, the British Ambassador to Portugal, did it have any effect. For some time past it was known in the fleet that its presence had caused the Portuguese King to back out of his engagement to France, though as yet he hesitated to throw in his lot with the allies. Methuen believed that it only required a squadron to winter in the Tagus and other Portuguese ports to make

[1] *Add. MSS.* 29591 (*Hatton-Finch Papers*), September 14 and 24. Also *H.O. Admiralty*, xiii. At this point there is unfortunately a gap in this Entry Book, but the *Hatton-Finch Papers* to some extent continue the series of despatches.

him take the plunge, and a despatch hinting this reached Rooke on September 21 as the fleet rendezvoused off Lagos on the south coast of Portugal for the homeward voyage.

Methuen had arranged to communicate with Rooke through the British consul at Faro, and as the fleet passed it a Dutch cruiser was sent in to bring off despatches. In view of what afterwards occurred this becomes highly important. On receipt of Methuen's suggestion a council of war was summoned, but it decided that his proposal was too vague to act on, and that there was no time to wait for a more definite explanation. The decision, it would seem, was taken by a bare majority, for Ormonde, Hesse, and the Dutch generally continued to support the idea so warmly that a fresh council was called. It was only to endorse Rooke's determination. Whatever chance of Portuguese support, it was argued, there may have been when Methuen wrote, the whole situation was changed by the failure at Cadiz, and Portugal could no longer be trusted. In accordance, therefore, with the original instructions, six of the line and a dozen transports with three thousand men were detached to the West Indies, and Rooke was soon speeding northward, ignorant that before him lay an exploit which was to retrieve his reputation and finally place Portugal at the disposition of the allies.

What had happened was this. Having evaded Benbow in the West Indies, Château-Rénault and his priceless charge had reached the Azores in safety. There he had received information of the British movements to intercept him, and had done his best to persuade his Spanish colleagues to seek safety in Brest or some other French port. To so insidious a proposal they absolutely refused to listen, and the only thing for Château-Rénault to do was to try a dash through the enemy's cruisers. St. Vincent and Finisterre were the points of danger. There the English had been wont to lie on such occasions ever since the days of Elizabeth. Vigo lay midway between them. To Vigo therefore it was decided to go, and there

on September 11 Château-Rénault arrived, having cleverly slipped in unobserved between Rooke and Shovell.

For this Rooke both then and since has always been severely blamed. He is accused of wholly neglecting the treasure fleet and of taking no steps to get intelligence of it, and by no one more acrimoniously than by Methuen himself. But, however badly Rooke behaved during the campaign, this charge is one that cannot be upheld. As we have seen, he duly sent into Faro and received Methuen's last despatch. Although the Plate fleet had been in Vigo five days when he wrote it, it contained no mention of it, except a rumour that Château-Rénault was expected—a rumour which Methuen himself clearly did not believe.[1] Rooke also, before passing St. Vincent, sent three cruisers with the horse transports into Lagos to water, and later on three more into Lisbon to bring Methuen back to England. It is true these detachments were apparently to make their own way home, but it is clear that, if Methuen had any news, he had abundant opportunity of sending it.

Meanwhile, on the 18th, the ambassador had heard of Château-Rénault's arrival at Vigo and was sending messenger after messenger to the coast. The first one reached the British consul at Faro late on the night of the 22nd. The fleet had just passed westward out of sight, and while the council of war were deciding to continue the homeward voyage the consul in person was pursuing Rooke in a hired boat. In spite of his efforts he failed to find the fleet and had to return discomfited. It so happened, however, that Methuen's messenger, a certain Don Josef Cisneros, who was also carrying despatches from the Imperial ambassador to the Prince of Hesse, was on his own account pursuing the fleet by land along the coast. At Lagos he found the horse transports still watering, and fell in with some of the officers of the 'Pembroke,' one of the escorting frigates. By the help of their chaplain they quickly ascertained his news and carried him on board to their commander, Captain Hardy. The glorious news was promptly communicated to the commodore, Captain Wishart, and he at once took

[1] *Rooke's Journal*, pp. 217, 221.

the responsibility of sending off the 'Pembroke' to catch the fleet.[1] It was a hard chase. The weather proved very bad—so bad indeed was it that the cruisers which put into the Tagus with Rooke's letters, showing he had not received the news, could not put to sea again, in spite of Methuen's urgent orders, and he despaired of catching the fleet before it left the coast. Unknown to him, however, there was yet another chance. The news had already reached London, and orders were being sent off far and wide in eight duplicates, directing Rooke and Shovell to concert measures for the destruction of Château-Rénault wherever they found him, either at sea or in Vigo.[2] All was over before they came to hand. But with all these strings in play it is clear that it was by no mere chance, as it is always said, that Château-Rénault was caught. The Admiralty, Methuen, Shovell, and Rooke between them had taken steps which made his escape practically impossible.

Still Rooke had already reached as high as the extreme north of Portugal, close to Shovell's new station, before Hardy overtook him, and even then so foul was the weather that it was twelve hours before he could communicate his news to the admiral. At the time Rooke had his few remaining cruisers spread before him in a way that very probably would have got him the intelligence independently. So soon as he heard Hardy's report he called them in and formed a chain to connect him with Vigo and signal him a confirmation of Hardy's intelligence. The whole fleet then stood in after them, and the following day, when the weather had abated, he called a council of flag-officers. The question of attacking Château-Rénault where he lay appears to have met with considerable opposition. The danger of risking a great fleet so late in the season on that wild coast was insisted on, and some, it would seem, were in favour of still continuing

[1] *Hatton-Finch Papers* (*Methuen Correspondence*), *Add. MSS.* 29590, esp. ff. 135, 137, 151, and Methuen's despatch of October 5. For the chaplain's story see *Lediard*, ii. 753, *n.*

[2] *Add. MSS.* 29591, October 4 and 17; *Admiralty, Secretary's Out-Letters*, 29, October 5, 17, 20.

their homeward voyage, since they regarded the treasure fleet as now beyond their reach. Eventually, however, the more vigorous men prevailed, and, without consulting the military officers, it was decided to attack forthwith.[1]

As they approached Vigo they fell in with Captain George Byng, who had lately reinforced Shovell with a small division. From him they heard that the Channel squadron had reached its new station and was cruising not far to the westward, and Rooke resolved to call Shovell to his aid. In vain Byng begged to be allowed to stay and share the feast. To his intense disgust Rooke would not listen, and he had to carry the summons to his admiral. Still there was no thought of waiting till Shovell joined. The doomed fleet was found in the inmost recesses of the gulf, protected by a powerful boom and fort, and the vessels well arranged for a concentrated fire. The risk of attacking in waters so confined was enough to have staggered the stoutest hearts, but they did not flinch. To Vice-Admiral Hopsonn was committed the honour of leading the assault, while Rooke again took to his bed, and there Byng found him when he returned in the height of the action.

As the ships advanced they were forced to anchor prematurely for want of a breeze. The troops were nevertheless landed, and luckily before they could reach the batteries a fair wind sprang up. Hopsonn promptly cut his cable and, with a press of sail, charged the boom. Under his great impetus it broke, but, before his supporting ships could follow, the breeze died away, and Hopsonn was left alone anchored within the boom between two French ships of the line. For awhile his situation was in the highest degree critical, but he fought on desperately till the breeze

[1] This view of what occurred is mainly on Dutch authority. Their tradition is that the decision to attack was due to the resolute attitude of Van Almonde in opposition to Rooke 'as well as most of the English and Dutch flag-officers.' See De Jonge, IV. ii. 221 and *note*. In *Torrington's Memoirs* is also mentioned a report that Rooke was not in favour of attacking. Burnet says 'Rooke turned his course towards Vigo very unwillingly, as was said.' But neither of these authorities can be trusted in any statement derogatory to Rooke. It may however be true, for he still thought himself too ill to leave his cabin,

returned, and one by one his consorts, Dutch and English, hacked or forced their way through. At the same moment the troops carried the batteries; and then, as Captain Stephen Martin says, 'for some time there was nothing to be heard or seen but cannonading, burning, men and guns flying in the air, and altogether the most lively scene of horror and confusion that can be imagined.' All the afternoon the work of destruction raged, and when the sun went down Château-Rénault's fleet had ceased to exist. Rooke, by the prompt daring of his officers, had gained one of the most complete victories in British naval annals. The French flagship and six others were burnt, four were captured afloat, and the rest driven ashore, and the galleons were similarly dealt with. Most of the treasure had been sent up country, but a good deal was saved, besides valuable merchandise.

Four days after the action Shovell came in, thirsting but forestalled. To him Rooke handed over the command with orders to float all he could, burn the rest, and so bring the fleet home. In vain, at the eleventh hour, Ormonde and Hesse returned to the charge and begged him to leave behind an adequate squadron so that they might establish themselves where they were for the winter, and so support Methuen in his efforts to bring Portugal to a decision. By sending home the victuallers and surplus stores, Rooke had made any such project impossible, and nothing would induce him to move from the attitude he had taken up. There was therefore nothing to be done but re-embark the troops. Captain Hardy for his reward was hurried off with despatches, and the next day Rooke with an easy conscience weighed for Spithead with sixteen sail, including the six great ships, to whose safety in his eyes all strategy had to subserve.

So he had his way at last. By forcing the campaign into the shape he had desired from the first he had been able, in accordance with his original memorandum, to 'attempt something on the coast of Spain' and come home before winter. He had seen the Government's project for seizing the control of the Straits covered with disaster, while his own miraculously had secured a victory

beside which the successes of even Marlborough and Eugene looked pale.

It must not be supposed, however, that he came off scot-free. On Ormonde's complaint a searching and hostile inquiry into the admiral's conduct was held in the House of Lords. He came out of it very badly, but his influence in the House of Commons was too great for him to fear a serious condemnation. With calm effrontery he defended himself by contemptuously denouncing the plan of campaign he had been called upon to execute against his better judgment; and the bungling way in which the expedition had been prepared for him made it impossible for the ministers to meet his defence without exposing themselves. So Ormonde was quieted with the Lord-Lieutenancy of Ireland, and Rooke whitewashed with a seat in the Privy Council. Between the new strategists and the old it was a drawn battle, and it remained to be seen whether Marlborough would yet have his way.

CHAPTER XXX

MARLBOROUGH AND THE NAVY

It was not till the end of November that Marlborough was able to get back to London. In his last days at the Hague he had been urging the home Government, at the request of the Dutch, to send a squadron to secure the Portuguese and offer to co-operate with them in capturing Vigo or any other place they preferred. The news of Rooke's exploit was enough to modify the pressing necessity for such a move, and about a week after Marlborough came home the 'Secret Committee,' as it was called, which was the Supreme Council of War or Committee of Imperial Defence, had adopted a plan of action after his own heart.

The decision was taken early in December at a meeting at which both he and Rooke were present. It will be remembered that in the previous year the Emperor had been given to understand that in this campaign the fleet would co-operate with him in capturing Naples, the object on which his heart and policy were mainly set. Accordingly it was now arranged that by the beginning of February a squadron of thirty sail, to which the Dutch were to be asked to add twelve or fifteen more, was to be ready to sail for the Mediterranean, and the Emperor was to be informed that it could be at Naples by May and remain there till the middle of July. The advantages of this plan were obvious. While it would divert French attention from Toulon, it would afford an opportunity for attacking it at the most favourable season of the year, and in the meanwhile the Emperor would be kept in a good temper, and the pressure upon Eugene in

the North of Italy relieved. It was only by the most brilliant generalship and dogged determination that he had been able to hold his own against the superior forces of the French, and owing to the vacillating attitude of Savoy his prospects were far from bright for the coming campaign. Rooke, it would appear, was not to conduct a move which was so contrary to his ideas. In fact he was probably regarded as too unwell to go to sea at all: for it is noted in the margin of the minutes 'Sir G. Rooke will take care of the Admiralty.'[1]

Why this project was not carried out we do not exactly know, but it may well have been that, owing to the late return of Rooke's and Shovell's squadron, it was found impossible to get sufficient vessels ready in time. The more probable reason however is that the Emperor found he would be unable to detach a force to co-operate with the fleet, and this from the first had been a condition of the British offer of assistance. Such co-operation was now out of the question. Owing to the serious condition of affairs in Hungary the Emperor had even found it necessary to summon Eugene to command the operations against the insurgents and to abandon altogether the idea of a vigorous offensive in Italy.[2]

However this may be, early in the new year, 1703, the idea of a Mediterranean squadron was considerably modified. At the end of January the 'Secret Committee' decided the general lines of the campaign. Marlborough was again present, together with Rooke and the rest of the Lord Admiral's council and the Dutch admiral, Van Almonde. The main fleet was to consist of ninety-six of the line, English and Dutch. They were to be ready for sea by April 20 and victualled for six months. In case a squadron should be thought necessary for the Mediterranean—so the minute runs—it was to be detached from the main fleet and its strength fixed according to the distribution of the French navy.[3] We thus see

[1] Minutes of the 'Secret Committee,' *Hatton-Finch Papers, Add. MSS.* 29591, December 8, 1702.

[2] Von Arneth, *Prinz Eugen von Savoyen*, i. 119 *et seq.*

[3] *Add. MSS.* 29591, January 26, 1703.

already established the most modern view of British naval distribution, which had been in practical operation ever since William had set his mark upon it. The root idea was the concentration of the bulk of the navy in one main fleet, organised so that it could act as one unit or in two divisions, as events demanded, either in the home waters or the Mediterranean, or in both simultaneously. There is clearly no idea of two fleets — one for the Channel and one for the Mediterranean—but from the first it is the conception to which our naval strategy has recurred after two centuries of experience—the conception of two divisions of one homogeneous force that, without noise or friction, can develop united action at any point where danger or opportunity calls for special pressure. To a modern student nothing can be more interesting or instructive than the way the idea of the great soldiers of that time was worked out by the seamen who so imperfectly grasped their meaning.

In spite of the hypothetical resolution of the Committee it is clear that Marlborough clung to his idea that a strong Mediterranean squadron was necessary. By March it had been fixed at twenty-four of the line, English and Dutch; and just before Marlborough returned to Holland, Rooke, who was better, was approached as to taking the command. He replied, in words that clearly betray the limits of his understanding, that he was willing to obey the Queen's wishes, but felt it was a command 'too small for his character.' If it were the same to her Majesty he would rather continue with the main fleet than be separated 'with so small a detachment on a remote service.'[1] On receipt of this answer the Secret Committee ordered a squadron to be made ready immediately for Shovell's command. It was to consist of twenty of the line, besides a Dutch contingent, with a full proportion of hospital ships, cruisers, bombs, and fire-ships. It was to carry a year's stores besides two months' victuals in store ships, and further supplies of wine and oil were to be prepared at Leghorn or Genoa.[2]

[1] *Add. MSS.* 29591, March 3, 1703, f. 193.
[2] *Ibid.* March 10, 1703, f. 195.

The chief and indeed the only interest that attaches to Shovell's force is the object for which it was designed. Though frequently modified in harmony with the changing aspects of the great struggle, Shovell's instructions display throughout a high appreciation of the value of a Mediterranean squadron as a diplomatic and strategical asset. As originally designed they appear to aim mainly at a diplomatic demonstration. Shovell was to renew the treaties with the Barbary states, and if possible induce them to declare war on France. He was also to appear at Leghorn and force the Grand Duke of Tuscany, who was openly leaning to the French, to pursue a more strict neutrality. Venice was to be treated in the same way, and while in the Adriatic he was to clear out the French and secure the Imperial communications with Trieste. Nor was this all. For the second time Malta appears within the range of British action. Shovell was to go there, but with what object is not clear. He himself asked for more precise directions on the point, but, before his orders were finally drafted, Malta for some reason was left out of them.[1]

Subsequently his instructions were cast in a more strategic mould. Although the withdrawal of Eugene and some of his best troops to Hungary rendered serious operations in Italy impossible, a diversion by the maritime powers to relieve the pressure on the Imperial troops that had to hold the position was still highly desirable. By no other means could they hope to resist the French advance. Under his new orders therefore Shovell was to take down the trade, and after seeing it safe on its way to the Levant he was to proceed, in accordance with the original idea, to Naples and Sicily, and co-operate with such Imperial troops as he should find there, and assist them with his marines. He had also authority to attack Cadiz, Toulon, or any other place in France or Spain, and to destroy any French magazines he might hear of about Genoa, and to protect

[1] *Hatton-Finch Papers, Add. MSS.* 29591, f. 199; Particulars proposed by Shovell, March 17, *ibid.*; Minute of Lord Admiral's Council for altering Shovell's instructions, *H.O. Admiralty*, xiii. 71, April 28.

the Imperialist communications in the Adriatic if the French were disturbing them, as indeed they were, very seriously.[1] All this reads as something of a counsel of perfection, and indeed it may only have been intended mainly to satisfy Marlborough's demands, or to keep the Emperor in a good humour. The instructions, at any rate, were accompanied by a covering letter, in which Shovell was told that, after seeing the trade safe into the Eastern Mediterranean, he might proceed as far as Leghorn. Having done his business there, he was to cruise as he thought best, or in accordance with orders he might receive, until September, when he was to come home with the returning trade.[2]

Thus, when Marlborough's back was turned and he was absorbed with his military duties in Flanders, the Mediterranean squadron seems to sink to the old and narrow conception of a force primarily destined for commerce protection. Rooke had so far got his way that he had been given command of the main fleet for the defence of the Channel. As for offensive operations, his orders were as old-fashioned as he could wish. Vast as was the force at his command, all he was expected to do was to enter the Bay of Biscay and annoy the coasts and trade of the enemy; and all the relief that the main fleet would afford to the position of the allies in the Mediterranean was by the demonstration possibly diverting some of the French army of Italy to the coasts of Guienne. Still, even with this easy task before him, he would not get to sea. Week after week he lingered at Spithead to the exasperation of the Government. At last, towards the end of April, on an alarm apparently that a French squadron was passing from Toulon to Brest, he received peremptory orders to sail. Still for a week he clung to his moorings, protesting he was too ill to move. Losing all patience, the Government sent off Churchill to relieve him. It had the desired effect. Before Churchill could reach Spithead Rooke was away. The incident did little to improve his reputation.

[1] *H.O. Admiralty*, xiii. 82, May 7.
[2] *Admiralty, Secretary's Out-Letters*, 30, May 8.

'Rooke's health,' says Burnet in his most caustic vein, 'returned happily for him, or he thought fit to lay aside that pretence and went to sea.' There can be no doubt that Rooke was one of those men whose popular reputation will sometimes remain proof against the most glaring exhibition of incapacity and lack of understanding. Under his guidance the main fleet was absolutely wasted. All it achieved in harassing the French coasts and confining the Brest and other Atlantic squadrons could have been done with half the force, and the rest would have been free for action where its operations would have thrown the whole of Louis's strategy into confusion.

That the Mediterranean squadron was not detached from the first fleet that was ready, as Marlborough wished, is to be the more lamented because the interminable delays of the Dutch in furnishing their contingent prevented Shovell's sailing till it was far too late for him to accomplish anything of value. Indeed, in justice to the British strategy, it must be said that the failure of the Dutch to fulfil their engagements was the main cause of the trouble. It was a source of irritation and difficulty that was to increase with every fresh campaign, and already it was accentuating the growing ill-feeling between the British and Dutch flag-officers. 'Everybody,' wrote Marlborough, 'is so much out of humour at the great disappointment we have long laboured under for want of their Mediterranean squadron.' [1]

Owing mainly to the time that had been wasted in getting Rooke to sea, it was not till the middle of May that Shovell's squadron was far enough advanced for him to hoist his flag. By that time an entire change in the situation was believed to be at hand, which for the moment shifted the main naval interest to a point outside the Straits. Godolphin, the Prime Minister, was the man most closely in Marlborough's confidence. He had married his son to the general's daughter and was indeed his other self in England; and what was actually uppermost in their minds may be gathered from a private letter written by

[1] To Stanhope, *Despatches*, i. 123, and cf. De Jonge, IV. ii. 253.

the minister shortly afterwards to Fairborne, Shovell's vice-admiral. He was asked for his opinion—not as to the best means of relieving the Imperialist position—but how best to protect trade, countenance Portugal, and at the same time secure the British coasts. He replied with a solid directness which shows that, if our seamen could not quite appreciate the diplomatic and political tangle with which the strategical problem was confused, they at least had not forgotten the time-honoured methods of cutting the knot. Louis, with his whole combination shaken by the defection of Portugal, and exposed to a disastrous blow in the Mediterranean, was endeavouring to get the Comte de Toulouse to sea from Toulon. All intelligence, Fairborne said, pointed to a concentration of the various French squadrons in Cadiz. His advice therefore was that Shovell should be reinforced from forty sail to sixty, with orders to bring the French fleet to action, even if he had to follow it into the jaws of Toulon.[1] It was sound and seamanlike advice, showing a lively appreciation of the elasticity of action, which the homogeneous organisation of a single main fleet afforded, and could it have been brought to effect the whole difficulties of the position would have been solved.

But, as it happened, before the arrival of the long-expected Dutch contingent allowed Shovell to sail, yet another new element in the situation had arisen. In the previous year the Protestants of the Cevennes mountains had risen in revolt, and, owing to Louis's preoccupation beyond his frontiers, the insurrection had reached alarming proportions. The revolted district lay in the hill country some forty miles north of Cette, the new port at which the Languedoc canal reached the sea, and stretched eastwards towards the frontier of Savoy. As Savoy was beginning to show a more marked inclination to throw in her lot with the allies, the insurrection assumed a very serious strategical aspect. It was clear that, by co-operation from Savoy on the one side and from the sea on the other, the Cevennes might be developed into a barrier which would cut the French communications with

[1] *Godolphin Correspondence, Add. MSS.* 28055, May 30, 1703.

Toulon and Italy, and seriously encumber those with Spain. It was mainly with a view of aggravating this situation that Rooke had been sent into the Bay of Biscay, but it was a situation that lent itself still better for well-directed naval action in the Mediterranean. It is no wonder therefore that when, about the time Shovell was hoisting his flag, a Cevennois agent appeared at the Hague and asked for assistance, the idea was warmly taken up.[1] Co-operation upon the coast of Languedoc was speedily arranged, and it was decided to reinforce Shovell with five of the line from the main fleet, provided the Dutch would agree to increase their contingent in proportion. Fresh instructions were sent him, directing that he was to make it his first business to get touch with the Cevennois in the Gulf of Narbonne, and furnish them with arms and munitions, and that above all he was to get away to the Mediterranean with all possible speed in order to convince the Duke of Savoy of the length of the sea powers' arm, and push him to a decision.[2]

Everything, it is clear to see, was still pointing to Toulon as the ultimate objective. It was at this time that Marlborough was endeavouring to negotiate a joint attack upon the place with the Duke of Savoy, and nothing could so well induce him to take the plunge as the support of the Cevennois revolt and the appearance of an allied squadron on his coasts. Owing however to Rooke's failure at Cadiz the main link in the necessary chain was still missing; but now arose a fresh chance of supplying it, which produced yet another change in Shovell's orders. In the last days of June, while he was still lying at Spithead, definite news arrived in London that Portugal had formally joined the Grand Alliance, and it was further known that the Toulon squadron was preparing to come through the Straits and deal her a blow while she yet lay unprotected. To the Tagus therefore the centre of gravity had for the moment definitely shifted. Seeing what Marlborough's views were of drastic action in the Medi-

[1] Stanhope to Hedges, May 18–29, *S.P. Spain*, 75.

[2] *Admiralty, Secretary's Out-Letters*, 30, June 9; *H.O. Admiralty*, xiii. June 16; *Life of Leake*, p. 65; De Jonge, IV. ii. 250.

terranean, to support Portugal on the terms of the new treaty of alliance was in his eyes a matter of vital importance. So clear to him was the necessity that he immediately offered to sacrifice his whole campaign in the Netherlands and remain upon the defensive, if troops could not otherwise be procured for Lisbon. It was in anticipation of this new situation that Godolphin had asked Fairborne's advice, and consequently, on the eve of sailing, Shovell was told, as Fairborne had suggested, that he was to be reinforced with eight of the line and that his whole proceedings were to be subordinated to the primary object of preventing the Toulon squadron passing the Straits and bringing it to action if it did.[1]

On July 1 Shovell at last put to sea. He would not wait for his reinforcements. They were to follow him to the Tagus under Admiral John Leake, a typical seaman officer, who was destined to hold a place of singular distinction among the founders of the British Mediterranean power. Having established his reputation at the relief of Londonderry by forcing the boom, he had been in active and successful employment ever since, and had just been promoted Vice-Admiral of the Blue. He was a man who could be trusted not to lose time. Shovell must have known as well as any one that he was already too late to execute a tithe of his complicated programme, which was still uncancelled. To follow his movements is needless. The only result of importance that he achieved was to deter the Toulon squadron from putting to sea. Louis, unable to believe that so small a part of the main fleet was to be attached to Shovell, gave up the game and ordered the Toulon squadron to be dismantled. The Portuguese were thus convinced of the capacity of the sea powers to protect them, and so far all was well.

The rest was a failure. Bound as he was to return in September, Shovell could barely reach Leghorn before it was time to turn homewards. What time he had was spent in trying to overawe the Grand Duke of Tuscany. Two

[1] Marlborough to Nottingham, June 14, *Despatches*, i. 117. Shovell's orders are in *H.O. Admiralty*, xiii. June 29; and cf. *Torrington Memoirs*, p. 100.

vessels were also despatched to Narbonne, but the preconcerted signals were not answered, and they failed to get touch with the ill-fated Cevennois. A squadron too was detached under Byng, Shovell's rear-admiral, to visit the Barbary states; but, though they were civil enough, they would not commit themselves to a declaration of war. It was all that could be hoped for, seeing how Shovell's hands were tied. It is true that, some two months after he sailed, orders were sent him to leave behind him a squadron to clear out the Adriatic, where the French had been playing havoc with the Imperialist supplies; but even if they had reached him his fleet was too sickly for him to have been able to obey.[1] The whole design was hopeless from the first. Indeed we are told that when off Lisbon Shovell showed his orders to his colleague, Van Almonde, the Dutch admiral could hardly believe he had no others.[2] To complete the disappointments of the campaign his home-coming was marked with one of the most terrible disasters in our naval annals. As he lay in the Downs with his disease-stricken fleet, a storm of unprecedented fury fell upon it. Nine ships of the line were lost, besides four other vessels, with fifteen hundred hands, and half the rest that were saved were little better than wrecks.

In so appalling a visitation of Heaven his failure was condoned. Indeed, long before he could return with his fleet storm-torn and decimated by sickness, all interest in his movements had been lost. The Government was absorbed in developing its action from the new base it had acquired in Portugal. Savoy had joined the alliance, and already Marlborough, in concert with Eugene, was shaping that stupendous campaign which was to raise him to the highest rank of the great captains and for

[1] *H.O. Admiralty*, xiii. 95, September 9.

[2] *Torrington Memoirs*, 119. Other authorities for the voyage are Leake's *Life* and that of Capt. Stephen Martin (*Navy Records Society*). Van Almonde's view of it is in De Jonge, iv. ii. 249 *et seq.* For the Narbonne episode see Charnock, *Biog. Navalis*, *sub voce* Robert Aires or Ayres, who was in command. Shovell's despatch from the Downs to Nottingham, giving an account of his whole action, is in *Add. MSS.* 29591, f. 213, November 17.

good and all to establish England as a Mediterranean power.

One day, as Shovell lay before Leghorn truculently showing the distracted Grand Duke how he stood between the devil and the deep sea, far away inland men were startled with the roar of his guns thundering over the marshes. He had been informed by the Imperial ambassador that the Austrian Archduke had been proclaimed Charles III., and in the heart of the Mediterranean, for all the world to hear, the maritime powers were saluting the Hapsburg King of Spain. Had Shovell been bombarding the port his guns could not have spoken with a louder voice. It had been an essential point, in the treaty under which Portugal entered the Grand Alliance, that the Archduke Charles should be landed at Lisbon, and thence, with an allied army and the fleet of England and Holland at his back, undertake in force the conquest of his new kingdom. The struggle was transformed. During the year 1703 France had shown herself more than capable of holding her own against the great coalition, but now all was changed. She was confronted with another land war, as far as possible removed from her base, added to those in the Netherlands, Italy, and Germany. For the allies, widely as the four seats of war were divided, all were held together and nourished by an overwhelming sea power, while at the same time, by the adherence of Savoy to her enemies, France found her own connecting link exposed to a blow from the sea which she had no means to parry.

It was on this basis that the memorable campaign of 1704 was designed—the grandest probably that up to that time had ever been conceived. Marlborough's heroic resolve was suddenly to shift his whole force from the Netherlands to the Danube, and so tear Bavaria from the arms of France and fling Louis back from the Imperial frontier. The project was still a secret even from the allies. The objectives of the fleet were scarcely less well hidden. In midwinter Rooke had started to carry the new King to Lisbon, and though he was once driven back by storms he eventually reached the Tagus by the end of February.

It was a duty, though his force was but slender, that he found not 'too small for his character.' Transports with the promised troops accompanied or followed him, as the men could be got together, and in due season the bulk of the main fleet was to gather to his flag.

How far he knew this is uncertain. The whole plan of campaign was certainly not communicated to the Admiralty, and for a while at least it seems to have been kept even from Rooke. There exists a rough memorandum of about this time in Godolphin's hand, in which he notes for consideration how much of the Queen's intentions may be communicated to the Lord Admiral's Council with a view to their issuing the admiral's orders, and how much must be conveyed to Rooke in secret by a Secretary of State.[1] It was not till March that the design began to take shape. Marlborough had been over to Holland to arrange the preliminaries of his great move, and while there he had written to the Duke of Savoy to assure him that at his (the Duke's) request the Queen had decided to send a powerful fleet into the Mediterranean in the spring to support and facilitate his designs. The greater part of the ships, he said, were already at Lisbon, and he himself was going to make an important diversion which would effectually prevent the French increasing their force in Italy, or even, he added, against the Emperor.[2]

In the middle of March, about a fortnight after Marlborough's return from the Hague, we have the first secret draft of Rooke's final orders. He had already been informed that, besides operating on the coast of Spain in concert with the Portuguese, he might, if he saw his way, do the same on the coast of Provence with the assistance of Savoy. But now his instructions were made more definite. The French, in order to recover the position which they had lost by the adhesion of Savoy to the allies, were threatening Nice and Villafranca, the two Savoyard ports by which the Duke commanded the coastwise route from France into Italy and was in direct touch with the maritime powers. Rooke was therefore to

[1] *Hatton-Finch Papers, Add. MSS.* 29591, f. 252.
[2] *Marlborough Despatches*, ii. 231, February 10, 1704.

be informed that he was to hold himself in readiness to proceed to their relief at all hazards, and the moment he heard from Savoy that either place was in danger, he was to sail without waiting for his reinforcements to reach him.[1]

This draft is marked as having been read to Godolphin and Marlborough as though up to this time the secret was confined to them. Ten days later his instructions were drawn up and signed. Generally they were an exact repetition of those which Shovell had received the previous year, but with this difference, that Rooke's first duty was to relieve Nice in case it were besieged, and that, for fear of being too late, if a summons for help reached him, he was, if he possibly could, to enter the Mediterranean at once. To leave no doubt as to what the Government were aiming at, the formal instructions were accompanied by an 'explanation.' The Queen, he was told, desired above all things to have a fleet in the Mediterranean so as to be within striking distance of Nice at any moment. As for the rest of the campaign, she would leave it to the fleet council of war; but Rooke was to do his best to persuade his flag-officers that nowhere could they be so useful as in the Mediterranean. So long as they held that station Louis would be prevented from supporting or supplying his army in Italy by sea, while at the same time they would keep open the only line of communication which the Emperor had with his troops in Piedmont. As for assisting the Austrian party in Spain, which up to this time Rooke regarded as his main object, he could do it better by acting on the Mediterranean coast, and especially in Catalonia, than by any operations outside the Straits.[2]

So far went Rooke's open instructions, which every one concerned was to know, and never before perhaps was the higher strategy of the Mediterranean more luminously formulated. In its breadth and firmness we feel the touch of Marlborough, the hand not only of the great general, but of the great war minister, who sees in their true proportions the scope and end of naval action.

[1] *H.O. Admiralty*, xvi. 39 and *ibid.* xiii. March 14, 1704.
[2] *Ibid.* xiii. March 24, 1704.

To the sailor the aim of naval strategy must always seem to be the command of the sea. To the soldier and the statesman it is only the means to an end. For them the end must always be the furtherance or the hindrance of military operations ashore, or the protection or destruction of sea-borne commerce; for by these means alone can governments and populations be crushed into submission. Of the two methods that of military pressure must always come first, where resources allow, just as an assault, where practicable, is always preferable to the more lengthy blockade. If, therefore, it be possible to give sudden emphasis to vital military operations by momentarily and without undue risk abandoning the sailor's preoccupation—by ceasing for a moment to aim solely at the command of the sea—a bigoted adherence to it may become pedantry and ruin the higher strategy of the campaign.

On these fundamental principles of warfare Rooke's instructions were framed, and framed in the best possible way. The portion of the far-reaching design which Marlborough wished Rooke to carry out was not forced upon the fleet. It was merely placed lucidly before the flag-officers that they might clearly perceive their place in the great whole so far as it could be safely disclosed. It was left to their judgment and loyalty to say how far the limitations of their art enabled them to carry into effect what the Government looked to them to perform. Moreover, although the military exigencies of the situation were pressed upon them, their own immediate concern was not forgotten. From the spies and agents of the admirable intelligence system, which was then in existence, was flowing a constant stream of reports of French naval activity both in Toulon and the western ports. The secret of their intentions had not been penetrated. The reports variously pointed to a concentration either in the Mediterranean or in the Atlantic, or possibly to separate squadrons acting in each arena.[1] To meet this uncertain situation the last clause of Rooke's instructions informed

[1] *Admiralty Secretary, In-Letters*, vol. 3930.

him that he was to prevent a junction of the Toulon and 'West France' squadrons, and that, if the Toulon squadron got out of the Straits, it was to be his first duty to follow it and bring it to action. This in fact was a naval condition to which every military necessity must subserve.

The brilliance and lucidity of the whole design come out still more clearly when we consider what were Rooke's secret instructions and how admirably the open ones were constructed to prepare the way for their execution. As the campaign existed in the minds of Eugene and Marlborough, it was to rest upon a secret and sudden concentration against what may be called the right flank of the French at the Danube. At their opposite flank was to be a minor attack or diversion in the form of an invasion of Spain by Portugal and the Hapsburg King. Though this movement was to receive the support of the fleet, it was not Rooke's main object. The memorable and unexpected fruit of his campaign has long ago obscured what that object was. It was in truth nothing less than the fruition of Marlborough's long-pondered design. It was upon Toulon—the French centre as we may regard it—that the weight of his force was to be thrown. There, by a sudden and secret blow in concert with the Duke of Savoy's army, he was to seize and destroy the seat of the French Mediterranean power. Not a soul was to be informed; but, so long as the Duke of Savoy held to the project, Rooke was to regard the operation as taking precedence of everything else, excepting only the relief of Nice and the shadowing of the Toulon fleet if it got out of the Straits. The operations on the Spanish Mediterranean coast were to extend no further than was desirable for masking the real objective. So soon as the blow at Toulon had been struck he was to set about reaping the fruit of the victory by proceeding direct to Palermo. There, by using private signals with which he was furnished, he was to get into communication with the Austrian party and endeavour with their co-operation to induce the city to declare for the Hapsburg King. The same was to be done at Messina, and from these points he might endeavour to reduce the whole of Sicily, and

subsequently, with the same end in view, proceed to Naples.[1]

Such in its entirety was the grand design of this memorable year. We have only to bear in mind the leading idea of the main attack upon the Danube to see how each part assists and amplifies the rest. The ambitious programme assigned to Rooke was of course scarcely practicable, and it depended too much upon the unstable factor of Savoy. Still it must not be dismissed as a dream. We should take it rather as an indication of the incalculable power of strategical disturbance that lies open to a Mediterranean fleet. By judicious handling of his force and a clear grasp of the situation it was in Rooke's power to contain at least four French armies, and to prevent support being sent from any of the points that lay within the length of his arm, to the vital battle-ground in Central Europe.

It was, as we have seen, in the last days of March that Rooke's orders were settled, and before a week was out Marlborough was at Harwich waiting for a wind to carry him across to Holland that he might set in motion the vast machinery which he and Eugene had adjusted. Rooke was already at work. Early in March Leake arrived in the Tagus from England with a combined English and Dutch squadron. Rooke had put to sea at once, and in accordance with his first instructions had spread his fleet in cruising formation between Capes St. Vincent and Espartel with the threefold object of covering the English Levant trade in its passage through the Straits, intercepting some enemy's ships expected from Buenos Ayres, and preventing men-of-war slipping out from Toulon to join the squadrons in the West France ports.[2] Though the Buenos Ayres vessels were missed in dirty weather, two ships of the line were taken, and towards the end of April Rooke had returned to Lisbon. There he found his new orders awaiting him, and communicated them, so far as they were not secret, to his council of war. In concert with his Dutch colleague a decision was quickly arrived

[1] *H.O. Admiralty*, xiii. March 29, 1704, and *ibid.* xvi. 123 *et seq.*
[2] *Torrington Memoirs*, 127.

at. It was agreed to proceed immediately into the Mediterranean and pass as high as Barcelona with the double object of supporting the Hapsburg party in Catalonia, and being at hand to relieve Nice and Villafranca if they should call for assistance. Rooke's real object was of course to get unsuspected within striking distance of Toulon, but of this he said not a word, nor of Sicily and Naples, although Charles was very anxious that a demonstration should be made there as well as off Barcelona. With the Dutch contingent Rooke had some forty sail, and with them he entered the Straits in the first days of May, and watered by force in Altea Bay.[1]

In Toulon, according to the intelligence which the Government had, a fleet of about thirty of the line was being brought forward for the Comte de Toulouse—a force which would probably be about equal to that of Rooke, at least on paper—and it was believed to be the intention of the French to pass it out of the Straits and endeavour to form a concentration at Cadiz with the Atlantic divisions from Brest, Port Louis, and Rochefort—together scarcely inferior to the Toulon squadron. This Atlantic or 'West France' squadron was to be dealt with by the Channel squadron under Shovell, with Fairborne and Byng for his flag-officers. Shovell had also the charge of the mass of trade proceeding southwards, and of the stores for Rooke and the transports for Lisbon. About the middle of April, on an alarm that the Brest squadron was coming out, he received sudden orders to hoist his flag and get to sea. If he found the news was true and that the French were in superior force, he was to retreat with all his convoy into the Thames; otherwise he was to proceed off Brest, and if the squadron was still there he was to send on the trade and transports under convoy and devote his fleet to preventing a concentration of the three 'West France' divisions. If however he found the Brest division had sailed and had reason to believe its destination was the Straits, he was to detach in chase a force that would make Rooke superior; and if it were necessary to detach

[1] *Life of Sir John Leake*, p. 77; *Torrington Memoirs*, p. 127; *Capt. Stephen Martin*, p. 75.

the greater part of his fleet, he himself was to go in command and place himself under Rooke's flag.[1]

Here then again we have the British naval strategy resting firmly on the fundamental idea which William III. had inaugurated, that the Channel and Mediterranean squadron must be regarded as one main fleet, to be used wholly or in part either within or without the Straits as the distribution of the enemy's force demanded. Marlborough, who alone of Englishmen appears to have grasped the true potentialities of the Mediterranean, had at last got his way, and at the outset he was employing that very policy which we regard as among the latest and highest developments of modern naval thought.

With these well-conceived instructions Shovell put to sea, and by the middle of May, with his whole charge, was off the Lizard, his first rendezvous. Here he received intelligence from the Admiralty that Toulouse himself had suddenly arrived at Brest and taken the squadron to sea a fortnight since, and as the news was confirmed by his own scouts he resolved to carry on and feel for Toulouse in the Soundings. Finding no trace of him there he concluded he must have gone for the Straits. According to his orders he therefore gave chase in person with the bulk of his force.

Nothing, it will be observed, was said in Shovell's instructions of the secret object of Rooke's fleet. The fact was that the situation had changed in a way that necessarily modified the original design. When Hill, who was charged with the negotiations with Savoy, reached Turin at the beginning of April, he found the Duke had grown ominously cool about the projected attempt on Toulon. The Dutch, who were stubbornly bent on keeping their fleet to protect their commerce, had informed the Duke that they were averse to engaging it in so desperate an adventure, and he demanded a definite assurance that Rooke would come, and come soon. Hill said all he could and promised the Duke two hundred thousand crowns so soon as Toulon was in flames. But all was in vain. It soon became known that the French

[1] *Torrington Memoirs*, 122.

had abandoned their designs on Nice and Villafranca, and that the troops raised for the purpose were being sent to reinforce the army of Italy. The result was that the Duke found it impossible to spare enough troops to act with the fleet, and Hill had to send word to Rooke that there was no hope of Savoy's co-operating with him in Provence.

This unwelcome news arrived home as Shovell was passing down Channel collecting his fleet, and it was at once sent on to Rooke. He was further informed that the Imperialist forces in Italy were so few and bad that it was useless to attempt to co-operate with such material. He was therefore to fall back in order to concert operations with the Archduke Charles and the King of Portugal on the coast of Spain, and above all to intercept Toulouse if he got away from Brest and attempted to enter the Straits. At the same time he was informed of Shovell's orders and told to look out for him.[1]

Marlborough, who thus saw one half of his grand design wiped clean away, received the news with his usual cheery good humour. He had already reached Ladenburg in the heart of Germany with his cavalry. In ten days he hoped to be on the Danube, and the meaning of his heroic move was apparent to all concerned. In his answer he contented himself with approving the step that had been taken and with warning the Government, which was nervous about an attack on the English coast, of what Toulouse's intention most probably was. 'There is no doubt,' he wrote, 'of his being gone from Brest, but I am apt to think his orders are to sail directly to Cadiz, so that I am glad care is taken to reinforce Sir George Rooke, and that he has fresh orders to co operate with the Portugal troops on the coast of Spain; for I fear, without the assistance of our naval force, we shall not be able to make any great progress at present on that side.'[2]

Meanwhile, as the great symphony developed, Rooke, in accordance with his secret orders, had moved on to

[1] Hill's despatches, April 11–18, *S.P. Foreign, Savoy*, 26; Rooke's instructions, May 9, *H.O. Admiralty*, xiii. 148.

[2] To Sir Charles Hedges, June 4, *Despatches*, i. 295.

make his feint at Barcelona. He was still ignorant of the altered conditions when he anchored in the Bay, and no one but himself knew what his real intention was. Hesse, who was with the fleet, was as ignorant as the rest, and as eager as ever to decide the campaign with his beloved Catalans. He had been assured that he had only to appear before the place for his friends to rise and declare for Charles III. So sure was he of his power that on the way he had persuaded Rooke to make something more than a demonstration, and permit him to land the marines and bring the smouldering insurrection to a head. This was accordingly done. Barcelona was summoned in the name of the Hapsburg King, but for answer Hesse got nothing but defiance. There is no reason to believe that his information was false, but he had not calculated on the personality of the governor, Don Francisco de Velasco. This man, by the ascendency of his character and adroit tact, was able to keep under the disaffected element and to inspire his adherents with his own determination. He pointed out the smallness of the force that had landed, and that the Archduke had not had the courage to come in person. The result was that not a man moved. A bombardment was tried, but that only made matters worse and turned lukewarmness to exasperation. It was clear the experiment had been miscalculated, and Rooke, after letting Hesse try his hand for a fortnight, would wait no longer and insisted on re-embarking his men for his main design.[1]

For the failure therefore at Barcelona Rooke was in no way to blame. For him the whole affair was only a feint, though, seeing what the information was, he certainly exercised a wise discretion in permitting Hesse to turn the feint into a *coup de main* if he could. He was equally wise in refusing to allow him to continue the operation for any length of time. He was still secretly bent on Toulon, nor did he give a hint of his intention beyond detaching Rear-Admiral Dilkes with a small division to look into the port. The rendezvous he gave was the

[1] Mahon, *War of Succession*, i. 97; Duro, *Armada Española*, vi. 51; *Torrington Memoirs*, 127; *Life of Leake*, 78.

Hyères islands, and his council of war believed they were going as far as Nice and Villafranca, to see them safe and then to return and attack Barcelona in force. His real object was of course to get into communication with Hill in order to concert operations with the Savoyard army. Whether he did so or not is uncertain, nor can we tell whether or not he had by this time received his amended orders. All we know is that at Hyères he heard from Methuen, the Ambassador at Lisbon, that the Brest fleet had passed the Tagus on its way to Toulon. The council of war immediately determined that this fleet must now be their sole objective, and, without waiting a day, Rooke sent word to Hill that he was turning back to meet Toulouse.[1]

[1] *Journal of Rooke's Voyage*, 1704, Brit. Mus. 816, m. 23, pp. 179 *et seq.*

CHAPTER XXXI

GIBRALTAR AND MALAGA

WITH the change of front which had been forced upon Rooke and the British Government a practically new naval campaign commences. Owing to the inability of Savoy or the Imperialists in Italy to provide the necessary military element, the elaborate design which Marlborough had formed for breaking into the centre of Louis's wide-spread position had to go by the board. Without the co-operation of an adequate military force Rooke could do nothing. It was only on the extreme opposite flank to that upon which Marlborough was closing that this condition existed. True, the army of the allies in the Peninsula was weak and unsatisfactory enough; still, as they stood, it was the only point where naval and military co-operation could be brought into play, and it was therefore only in this quarter of the vast field of hostilities that Rooke could hope to make the enemy feel the smart of his command of the sea.

For the moment, however, that command was threatened. By the escape of the Brest squadron Rooke was in danger of finding himself in inferior force at the vital point, and his sole and immediate object became the defeat of that squadron in order to prevent its junction with that of Toulon. It was now a purely naval question, with which Rooke was quite at home, and, rightly disregarding all political and military distractions, he spread his cruisers to get touch with Toulouse. With his council of war he had settled the exact course they were to pursue. If the enemy was sighted before they

reached the Straits they were to do their utmost to deal him a blow; if not, they were to hurry on to Cadiz and seek an occasion of bringing him to action there. If he refused they were to proceed to Lisbon, to meet Shovell and replenish with stores. They knew that Toulouse's intention was to join hands with the squadron which he expected to come out of Toulon to meet him, and they believed that, whether the combined French fleet entered the Straits or attempted anything on the Portuguese coast, they would be in a position to give a good account of it.[1]

It was not long before their action was decided for them. On the second day after the council the scouts signalled the enemy in sight, and on the morrow the two fleets were in contact. The French, to the number of about fifty, with thirty-one of the line, were to windward, and as they formed line of battle Rooke went about to the northward to cut them off from Toulon. Though the French were slightly superior, they refused an engagement and held on for their destination, and being clean they soon began to show their heels to Rooke's foul fleet. All that day, however, he struggled on. The next the weather fell almost calm, and it became clear that nothing could prevent the French admiral making Toulon if he chose, and that Rooke's only chance of bringing him to action was in the mouth of the port where the allies would be exposed to an overwhelming attack from both the French squadrons. It was therefore resolved to abandon the chase and make the best of their way to join Shovell in the Tagus preparatory to further action.[2]

The French had fairly won the first round of the game. But Shovell was speeding southwards, and a few days later he put into the Tagus for water and provisions so as to be ready to get to sea the moment he received a summons from Rooke. Here, however,

[1] De Jonge, iv. ii. 293, quoting the Dutch 'Minutes of the Joint Council of War held on board H.M.S. "Royal Catherine," off the Hyères Islands, May 25, 1704 (o.s.)'

[2] *Ibid.* iv. ii. 294, from the Journals and Despatches of the Dutch admirals, and *Life of Leake*, p. 80.

he heard what had happened. Toulouse had entered the Straits, and, fearing Rooke might be overpowered, he very properly decided to go in search of him without waiting for orders. Thus it was that on June 16, just as Marlborough was joining hands with the Margrave of Baden, Rooke and Shovell met off Cape St. Mary, and at both extremities of the French position the situation was ripe for the catastrophe.

Had the admirals been left to themselves they would have been in no doubt what to do. They were all in favour of holding to the resolution taken off Hyères and entering the Straits in search of the now united French fleet. But there were political considerations which complicated the problem. Their last orders were to co-operate with the Kings of Spain and Portugal in supporting the land war in the Peninsula, and it became necessary to send into Lisbon to know what was required of them. At the same time Toulouse's fleet in Toulon remained their chief consideration, and while awaiting an answer they resolved to get into the best position they could for dealing with it if it moved. To this end, as Marlborough was in the act of defeating the Bavarians at Schellenberg and securing his passage of the Danube, they decided to enter the Straits and water by force at Malaga. There they would be well placed, both for engaging Toulouse if he attempted to reach Cadiz, or to go to the rescue of Nice or any other port of the allies if he intended a stroke in that quarter.

Nothing could have been better under the circumstances. The two kings appear to have had no objection to the movement, and had contented themselves with requesting that on its way to the Straits the fleet would attempt something on the coast of Andalusia. Cadiz was the place particularly indicated in the admirals' instructions, and this they knew was what the two kings would most like to see undertaken. They had therefore expressed their willingness to attack the place if sufficient troops could be provided to act with them. Now Shovell had already ascertained at Lisbon that it was extremely unlikely that such troops would be forthcoming, and they had therefore every reason to believe that the answer

from Lisbon would set them free to proceed up the Straits and devote themselves to bringing Toulouse to action.[1]

For a week baffling easterly gales prevented their entering the Mediterranean. A further delay was caused by false intelligence that a French squadron had taken advantage of the weather to slip through and had got into Cadiz. Nor was it till July 7 that they reached Malaga and seized the watering places. When the whole fleet was watered, Rooke put to sea, and, while waiting for his answer from Lisbon, occupied the entrance of the Straits in readiness for Toulouse if he appeared. In a week the answer came and the memorable council of war of July 17 was called to consider it.

The proposal of the two kings, as the admirals expected, was for an attack on Cadiz, but as no troops could be promised it was promptly rejected. Then it was that in considering how best to pursue their own object, and at the same time to satisfy their instructions and the expectations of the two kings, the momentous word was spoken. Dim in the distance glimmered the Rock of Gibraltar. For a century past it had shone enticingly in English eyes; for half a century it had been an admitted end of their endeavour. Cromwell had stretched out his hand to it. Under Charles II. English careening hulks had been stationed there in preference to Tangier. William III. had marked it for his own, and had never ceased in peace or war to work for its possession; and since his death every admiral that had sailed for the Straits had been instructed to capture it if he could.

From whom the suggestion came we know not, but it matters little; for by this time the idea had become a commonplace both in the cabinet and the service. It is generally attributed to Prince George of Hesse-Darmstadt, who was with the fleet still in hope of effecting something in Catalonia. Sir John Leake, the vice-admiral of Rooke's squadron, says that he himself had proposed it to the Prince some time before 'as the most

[1] *Torrington Memoirs*, pp. 128, 129.

advantageous conquest that could be made for the benefit of the trade as well as the fleet during a war with France and Spain,' but that it could not be undertaken till the two kings had agreed not to attempt Cadiz.[1] We know, at any rate, that a memorandum from Hesse was laid before the council of war, as soon as the decision of the kings was known. If it did not contain the formal proposal, it was certainly Hesse's sanction that was the decisive factor. It is the custom of historians to credit England's possession of the gate of the Mediterranean to Rooke's fearlessness of responsibility. But as a matter of fact so long as he had the sanction of King Charles's representative, he was incurring no responsibility at all. No one knew better than he, as William's most trusted naval councillor, how long Gibraltar had been the secret and the open aim of successive English governments. He knew the weakness of the place, and his own strength was overwhelming. By the Queen's instructions he had full authority to undertake the operation; he had been requested by the two kings to attempt some place on the Andalusian coast; and he actually had in his pocket a proclamation by Charles III. to his city of Gibraltar, telling them the British admiral was going to call with his fleet to receive their submission.[2] All that he required was to satisfy his last caution from home about acting only by consent of the two kings, and this consent had been given by Hesse's action. If he had not seized so favourable a chance of retrieving his waning reputation and of saving another barren campaign, it would have been sheer madness. Still, he must not be denied the credit of having overcome some opposition. Byng, who was Shovell's vice-admiral, has left it on record that the proposal 'was lightly thought of by many at the council.' He himself was one of them. But to his and his friends' objections Rooke had sharply replied that not only should the place be attempted, but that Byng himself, the leader of the opposition, should conduct the attack.[3]

[1] Leake's *Life*, p. 83.

[2] Lopez de Ayala, *Hist. of Gibraltar* (trans. James Bell), p. 136, where the proclamation is set out.

[3] *Torrington Memoirs*, p. 137.

A New and Exact Map of the City and Bay of GIBRALTAR in Spain Taken by Sr G. ROOKE Vice-Admiral of England The 24 of July 1704. By H M.
0 1 2 3 4
English Miles
PART OF ANDALUSIA
High Hills
BAY OF GIBRALTAR
Old Gibraltar
Ballast Place
C. Cabrita
Straits of Gibraltar
GIBRALTAR
Old Mole
Calpe Mons
Gibraltar Pt
MEDITERRANIAN SEA
Fort that blew up S th mole Head, here the Seamen landed
The Gr. Platform
Here y Prince of Hesse landed w 1800 Marines
Ol. Cromwell had a design upon this place, and would have cut this neck of land to make Gibraltar an Island &c.

The Bay is very fair and almost like a Haven landlockt for a West wind: but a South West wind bloweth right in, a South wind comes from y^e^ top of y^e^ Mountain of Gibraltar. to Anchor in this Bay you must sail so far in that y^e^ innermost Point of Gibraltar bears about East from you, then you will have 5 or 6 Fathom Clear ground y^e^ Ebbing and Flowing is about 3 or 4 Foot. in sailing with an Easterly wind from y^e^ Road of Gibraltar. you should bear up toward y^e^ West shore; for tis scarce possible you can get out of y^e^ Bay along y^e^ high land because y^e^ Easterly winds fall with such whirlings from the Hills of Gibraltar

GIBRALTAR

From 'A Discourse concerning the Mediterranean Sea,'
by Sir Henry Shere, 1705

So much and no more was the height of Rooke's decision; nor as a feat of arms was his exploit more lofty. Renowned as that exploit became at the time for political reasons at home, and afterwards for its lasting effects on history, the truth is there was nothing in it heroic either in the resolution of the admiral or in the difficulty of its execution. Gibraltar at this time was little more than it had been throughout the middle ages, a third-rate seaport town with works designed to secure it against the Barbary pirates. Charles V. had constructed the wall which included the Rock in the defended area, and Philip II. had added a bastion or two. Philip IV., it is true, had done something more. Till his time it had had nothing but a galley harbour under the Old Mole. By constructing to the south of the town what was called the New Mole, he had provided it with a shelter for ships. Under him it had consequently increased substantially in population and prosperity, and during his war with Charles I. he had partially modernised the fortifications. But this only meant that the mediæval battlements had been replaced by parapets, and the towers cut down to the level of the curtains and filled in solidly with the rubbish.[1] Indeed it may be doubted whether some of these improvements, by extending the lines to be guarded, were not at the moment a source of weakness rather than strength, seeing how slender was the garrison. There was not even a citadel: for the old Moorish castle had been dismantled and nothing had yet replaced it; while of the modern works recently designed by the French engineers not one had been carried out. The regular force that held it at the time had been reduced to under a hundred men, and with all the local militia which the governor could collect he could not raise a garrison of five hundred. Against Rooke's force, with its five and forty of the line, its frigates, fire-ships, and bomb-vessels, its two thousand marines and its overwhelming weight of metal, such a place was but a nutshell.

[1] Lopez de Ayala, *op. cit.*, and Luis Bravo's official report made in 1627, *Add. MSS.* 15152. This manuscript contains large plans and sketches in water-colour of the condition of the fortress as it then existed.

The contemptible condition of the fortress was well known in the fleet, and this indeed may have been the reason why the attempt was thought of so lightly by Byng and his friends; but Rooke had always the grand manner, and he approached it with all the pomp and circumstance of a great operation. In Tangier Bay, hard by the ruined mole under which he had helped to bury the hopes of the older Mediterranean school, the elaborate preparations for the attack were made. In four days they were complete, and on July 21 the fleet stood over to Gibraltar Bay. Byng and the Dutch rear-admiral Vanderdussen led the way with the battering squadron of seventeen of the line and three bomb-vessels, and the following day came to anchor about a mile from the town. Rooke followed with the rest of the fleet and the marines of Byng's squadron, and brought-to further in the bay towards Point Mala. Here in the mouth of the little river Guadarran the British marines, eighteen hundred strong, were landed under Hesse without opposition, and at once marched to the north front of the town, where they took up a position across the isthmus from sea to sea, so as entirely to cut off Gibraltar from the mainland. It was here, as was called to mind, that Cromwell had intended to cut his canal, and the investment was complete. It had been arranged however that Byng was not to open fire until the garrison had been summoned by Hesse, and, accordingly, from the position he had seized, the Prince sent in a trumpet together with King Charles's proclamation.

No answer was received that night, and next morning Byng signalled for the line of battle. While it was forming the governor's reply arrived. It was a sturdy defiance and a chivalrous declaration that he meant to hold the place for the King to whom he had sworn allegiance. On hearing the result Rooke reinforced the battering squadron with five more of the line, bringing it up to twenty-two. Byng disposed his force in a line stretching from the old mole to the new one. He himself, with a division of ten sail, occupied the centre opposite the town and south bastion. Northward of him was

the Dutch division of six sail before the old mole, while to the southward, facing the new mole and its defences, was an English division of six under Captain Jasper Hickes of the 'Yarmouth.' Outward of the line were the three bomb-vessels. As there was no wind, every one had to warp into position. The work proceeded all night, and by daybreak they were so close in that Byng had only a foot or two under his keel. As the first light of day revealed what had happened, the shore batteries opened. Byng promptly replied, and with so furious and well-sustained a fire that in a few minutes nothing could be seen but a stream of panic-stricken inhabitants hurrying out of the town towards the southernmost point of the Rock. It was the women and children flying for safety to Our Lady of Europa. There all that terrible Sunday morning, in the sanctuary of the old Mediterranean power, they cowered and prayed beneath the trophies of the great galley admirals while the roar of Byng's guns sounded in their ears the knell of the dead past.

Towards one o'clock the thunder of the bombardment sank into silence. It had lasted nearly six hours, and Byng had ordered a cessation to see what the effect had been. But for the fugitives a new terror quickly succeeded the first. Captain Whitaker of the 'Dorsetshire' had been sent down the line to convey the orders to cease fire, and by the time he reached the 'Lennox,' which lay nearest to the new mole, both he and her captain, William Jumper, could see that most of the guns in the works that defended it were dismounted and the garrison had apparently fled. Whitaker promptly hurried back to Byng with the opinion that the forts and mole might be seized. It was no part of the design, but Byng did not hesitate. Signalling for all the boats of his own line, he sent Whitaker off to Rooke to ask for the rest. Without waiting for a reply, however, he despatched Captain Hickes with his own flotilla, under orders to land to the southward of the mole head, and endeavour to take possession.

Shortly afterwards Whitaker came back with word that

Rooke had consented to the attack and that he himself was to command it. But, before he could get up to the mole, Hickes and Jumper were already well on their way, and the distracted suppliants of Our Lady of Europa, seeing the new danger, were streaming in terror towards the town. A gun or two headed them back, and under a misapprehension that it was a signal to re-open fire, the bombardment broke out again. Under cover of it Hickes and Jumper landed their men. Resistance there was none. During all this time Hesse and his marines had been vigorously assaulting the north front. It was consequently impossible to spare reinforcements for the garrison of the new mole, and, fearing to be cut off, they had retired into the town. Still the loss was severe. As the seamen recklessly rushed into the abandoned works with their matches burning in their hands, they exploded a magazine, killing or wounding about a hundred men, besides sinking a number of the boats.[1] Every one believed it was a mine that had been sprung, and for a moment there was a panic. But Whitaker's flotilla came up immediately, and with renewed spirit the whole landing force pressed northward along the sea wall. At a bastion half way between the new mole and the great or south bastion at the southernmost point of the town, they were compelled to halt, for there Charles V.'s wall barred their way. Here, therefore, and in the other works that he had taken, Whitaker was content to secure himself, while, by arrangement between Hesse and Rooke, a fresh summons was sent in simultaneously from both forces.

It demanded the surrender of the fortress in half an hour on pain of the last severities of war. All that loyalty could demand had been done; the women and children with Our Lady of Europa were at the sailors' mercy; and the governor decided to capitulate. On the morrow the articles were signed; the women and children were reverently escorted into the care of their own people in the town, and the defenders were allowed to march out with all the honours of war. So at last, after so many years of longing, the gate of the Mediterranean was in

[1] Pococke's Journal in *Torrington Memoirs*, App. p. 193.

British hands, the sanctuary of Europa had been stripped bare by Rooke's seamen, and the lamps of the Dorias and the Colonnas were resting in the ship-chests of Jumper and his friends.[1]

Gibraltar was taken, and, to add to the rejoicing, a frigate came in at the moment of victory with news of Marlborough's success at Schellenberg and his capture of Donauwörth. It also brought letters from home, and from Methuen at Lisbon which were less welcome. To take Gibraltar was one thing, to keep it another. Toulouse's fleet was still unbeaten, and Dilkes, with a squadron of observation, was cruising off Malaga on the look-out for it. The letters just to hand, however, gave Rooke to understand that Toulouse was in so great an inferiority to himself that there was little likelihood of his venturing out of Toulon.[2] He was therefore urged once more to attempt either Cadiz or Barcelona. Barcelona was quickly rejected by the council of war on the old plea that it was too late in the year to proceed so far up the Straits; but as for Cadiz, they felt bound to declare they were ready to co-operate until the middle of September, but no longer, and that only if an adequate force and siege-train were provided by the two kings as well as a garrison for Gibraltar. Such an answer was practically a refusal to do anything but maintain the conquest they had made. In this they were rightly absorbed, and to secure it they resolved to remain in the Straits till an answer came from

[1] The fullest accounts of the exploit will be found in the *Torrington Memoirs*, pp. 138–145; in Chaplain Pococke's Journal (*ibid.* pp. 190-5); and in the despatch of the governor, Don Diego de Salinas, to the Marques de Villadrias (Duro, vi. 63, Appendix). The other official Spanish documents are printed by Ayala (*op. cit.* Appendices xi.–xiv.). There is an old story that the flag of Charles III. was hoisted by some one when the place was taken, and that Rooke ordered it to be struck and the British flag to be hoisted in its place. I can find no confirmation of this improbable tale. Modern Spanish authorities reject it (Duro, vi. 58, *n.*). Rooke had orders to act strictly as Charles's agent, and the garrison was certainly summoned in Charles's name. The origin of the story may lie in the fact that the sailors planted the British flag on the works they took before the final summons and capitulation. It may well be that, when all was settled, Rooke ordered it to be removed, and so the perverted legend might have arisen (*Torrington Memoirs*, 143; see also *post*, p. 525, *note*).

[2] *H.O. Admiralty*, xiii. July 4, 1704 (o.s.). It was received with Methuen's of the 21st and 28th (n.s.) on July 24, *Torrington Memoirs*, 146.

Lisbon, and in the meanwhile to water the fleet by squadrons on the Barbary coast. It would seem that the admirals themselves were by no means easy about Toulouse, in spite of the sanguine views of the home Government. The reckless bombardment had made a serious hole in their magazines; they were obliged to send Vanderdussen with five sail to Plymouth to fetch some Dutch transports with reinforcements for Portugal; another squadron had been detached to the Azores to bring in the Brazil convoy, and they may well have doubted whether they were really so superior as to deter Toulouse from hazarding an action.

As a matter of fact the information which the English Government had sent was incorrect. Instead of having only forty of the line at his disposal, as they believed, Toulouse, in spite of every difficulty that was put in his way, had succeeded in getting fifty-one ready for sea, besides a score of galleys On the other hand, Rooke, instead of having sixty as they thought at home, had now only forty-one English and twelve Dutch of the line. He had nothing to set against the galleys, which were still regarded as formidable in giving mobility to a fleet in calms or light airs and against crippled ships at the end of an action. He was therefore really in inferior force, and so far from Toulouse being afraid to come out, he had actually put to sea a week before Rooke appeared at Gibraltar. His destination was Barcelona, which the French Court had been made to believe was Rooke's real objective, and there he expected to find the allied fleet, or at least to learn its position. Of what was happening in the Straits he was entirely ignorant, nor was it till he made Barcelona that he heard the stunning news that Gibraltar had fallen. He could be at no loss what to do, for awaiting him were orders from Madrid that without a moment's delay he was to proceed to the Straits. The sudden loss of the bulwark of the Spanish monarchy, he was told, had filled the Court with dismay. Already an army was on its march to the rescue, and between them they were to retake the renowned fortress, cost what it might.[1] We

[1] De Jonge, IV. ii. 306.

may well imagine the alarm that prevailed. In the minds of Spaniards Gibraltar was associated with the evil days, when it was the well-head from which Moorish conquest had flowed over the Peninsula. Its second fall was ominous of a new heretic dominion, and, sped by the prayers and terror of the faithful, the deliverer hurried again to sea.

Marlborough's great symphony had reached its fullest swell. Feverish as was the excitement in Spain, the worst was not yet known. Far away on the banks of the Danube a still more resounding blow had been struck. As Toulouse sped southward in search of Rooke, Marlborough and Eugene were crushing the most splendid of Louis's armies, and in Blenheim village the white flag was flying over the flower of his troops.

Meanwhile Rooke, having secured his conquest as best be could, had passed over to Tetuan. Gibraltar had been left to the care of Hesse and the British marines, and, screened by a squadron of scouts, the admiral was anxiously watering in hourly expectation of disturbance from Toulon.[1] Owing to the swell that prevailed the operation took nearly a week to perform It was not till August 8 that he weighed to return to Gibraltar, and even then a dozen unwatered ships had to be left behind. That night, with light easterly airs, he held across the Straits, still in ignorance of Toulouse's movement; but at break of day one of the scouts to windward was seen making the signal for an enemy's fleet. Byng, who was the first to see it, immediately hurried aboard the flagship to impart the unexpected news. Sir James Wishart, Rooke's first captain, was for retiring at once into Gibraltar Bay to cover the threatened fortress. Byng, however, vigorously protested against so wrong-headed a proceeding. To say nothing of the folly of receiving the French at anchor, the movement would enable Toulouse to cut off the squadron that was still watering at Tetuan. Unable to decide, Rooke made the signal for the line of battle, and, while it was

[1] De Jonge points out that, as the Dutch admirals made no objection to the fortress being occupied by a garrison that was entirely British, there can hardly have been any dispute about the flag (*op. cit.* IV. ii. 305).

being formed, summoned the council of war. It proved as eager as Byng for a bold offensive. Most of the flag-officers were unable to believe that Toulouse meant to fight, the more so as there was still no sign of his coming down. To confirm their views the scouts presently reported that he was making off in the direction of Malaga. The decision therefore was to endeavour to get half the marines back on board the fleet, and then, so long as the wind held where it was, to lie in the open water to the east of Gibraltar to await the French and cover the place against any attempt Toulouse might make to recover it. If, on the other hand, the wind came westerly, they were to follow the French as far as Malaga, but no further. For if they were not found there it would be pretty certain they had retired as usual to Toulon, whither it was too late in the season to follow them.

All that day, therefore, and the following night they held on in battle order to the northward, Shovell and Leake in the van, Rooke and Byng in the centre, and the Dutch in the rear. Meanwhile Hesse had handsomely met Rooke's request for the marines, and next morning the fire-ships and sloops from Gibraltar appeared with a thousand of them instead of only half. As soon as they were distributed, Rooke went about to the southward to pick up the twelve ships that had been left on the Barbary coast. The sound of the French signal guns, which all through the night had been growing more distant, had ceased altogether, and though the wind was fair for their coming down, not a sign of them could be seen. Towards evening Rooke made up his mind that Toulouse must be trying to get away from him, and, taking in the signal for the line of battle, he ordered a chase to windward. The wind held fresh from the eastward, and for two days he beat against it in long boards across the mouth of the Straits under a press of sail, and still not a sign of the enemy could be seen beyond one small vessel which the frigates chased ashore. During the next night it would seem that Wishart's anxiety for Gibraltar increased, and a fear arose that Toulouse by the help of his galleys might have slipped past inshore, and if so he would have

the half-repaired fortress and all the fleet auxiliaries at his mercy. At daybreak therefore on August 12 a fresh council was called, at which it was agreed that, as it was clearly hopeless to close with Toulouse if he meant to get away, it was best to bear up for the Straits, lie there for two days more, and then if the French did not appear to devote their whole force to putting Gibraltar in a condition to defend itself. So, in no hope of a fight, the council broke up. But scarcely were the flag-officers aboard their ships again and the new course set, when the whole French fleet was sighted off Cape Malaga to the north-west of them and to leeward, speeding before the wind towards Gibraltar.

Then the truth flashed upon them. To abandon his mission was far from Toulouse's mind. The meaning of his retrograde movement was merely that, having located Rooke, he wanted to pick up his galleys and water at Malaga before bringing him to action. So soon as this was effected he had hurried back towards the Straits, and during one of Rooke's long boards to the south-east had passed inshore of him. It was a curious chance that well exemplifies the almost incalculable hazards of the sea. Both fleets were short of cruisers, and it was by their inability to scout adequately that Toulouse lost the weather gage and Rooke gained it. Again it was by the mere chance of an hour or two that Toulouse did not elude Rooke altogether and find Hesse at his mercy in the defenceless fortress. On the other hand, had he done so, he would almost certainly have been caught by Rooke at a serious disadvantage that might well have involved the entire destruction of his fleet. As it was, Fortune had fairly divided her favour, and the superiority which Toulouse had in the size of his ships and weight of metal was almost balanced by his having lost the wind.[1]

[1] The remarks of the Marquis de Villette, who commanded the French van, make it clear they did not deliberately choose the leeward station. He says they lost the weather gage through the unfortunate necessity of having to go to Velez Malaga for water after they first got contact.—Monmerqué's *Mémoires du Marquis de Villette*, 154.

As to the comparative strength of the two lines, in numbers it was 50 French to 51 of the allies, but both Shovell and Rooke said the French

It was about five and twenty miles almost due south of Cape Malaga that the French were sighted, and they at once began to form line of battle with the wind abeam and heads to the southward. Seeing them thus resolutely interposing themselves between him and Gibraltar, Rooke called in his cruisers and, having re-formed line, began to bear down to attack. But the wind was light and fitful and little progress could be made. It remained so all day, so that the French with the aid of their galleys were able to form their battle order without falling further to leeward. Night fell with nothing done, but with darkness the wind improved, and at daybreak on the 13th the French line was seen perfect three leagues to leeward, and as the sun rose Toulouse hove-to to await Rooke's attack.

Then ensued an action which is now only remembered as inaugurating a period during which naval tactics sank to a hide-bound formality and rendered decisive engagements impossible—a period during which unintelligent admirals, pedantically absorbed in preserving their formation, contented themselves with fighting ship to ship and attempting no manœuvres for a concentration on part of their adversaries' line. It is doubtful however whether to dismiss the action so lightly is not to misjudge the conduct of the officers concerned and to create a misappre-

had 17 three-deckers to their 7. Rooke had not a single first-rate. Toulouse had two or three. The French had also over 3500 more men than the allies. Leake, however, considered the ships of the fleet pretty equally matched. He shows the allies had actually more guns than the French, and says the English 80-gun two-deckers were as heavy in metal as the French 80-gun three-deckers. Further, he says that more of the French were small. He tabulates thus:—

80 guns and upward	French 18	Allies 16
60 „ „	„ 20	„ 30
Under 60 guns	„ 12	„ 5
	50	51

His opinion, however, must be a little discounted because his advice was rejected and he thought the tactics of Rooke and Shovell were not as bold as they ought to have been. If the heavy calibres of the French first-rates and the large second-rates be taken into account, there can be no doubt they were markedly superior in weight of metal (S. W. Leake, *Life of Sir John Leake*). All French accounts accuse the allies of having used their bomb-vessels in the action, but this the allies deny.

hension of the lines on which sailing tactics developed. It must be remembered that it was only forty years since the older group system had disappeared and the practice of fleets engaging in two single lines had been fully adopted at the battle of the Texel in 1665. About thirty years later the Jesuit Paul Hoste embalmed the ideas of his friend and patron Tourville in his famous treatise on naval evolutions. Since this work was published in 1697 no important action had been fought in the open, and it may be taken as representing the thought of the time. It shows us that the chief end of tactics, apart from gaining the wind, was to isolate and double on a part of the enemy's force. In the early days of the new system the usual method of attempting this had been to break through the hostile line by suddenly tacking upon it in succession. This method had been the favourite one with Monk, who had used it with great boldness. Recently however it had fallen into disfavour owing to the risks it involved, and Hoste was of opinion it should never be attempted except under very special circumstances to save a critical situation, or when the faulty movements of the enemy gave a favourable opportunity by leaving a gap in his line. So long as the enemy's formation was intact, he held that doubling was never legitimate unless superior numbers enabled you to overlap him. You might then double on his van or rear. In the absence of these conditions the proper method was for the attacking fleet to bear down all together, each for its opposite in the line, and then, if by hard fighting a section of two or three ships could be forced out of the line, doubling might be attempted by passing through the gap that had been made.

It was this phase of expert opinion that underlay the much derided 'Fighting Instructions' of the British service. Ill-advised as they appear in the light of the developed system of Rodney and his successors, they nevertheless represent a definite and logical stage of progress, and history cannot afford to dismiss them with mere contempt. To a period of active and almost fanatical offence, that was perhaps largely due to the vigorous

personalities of Monk and Rupert, there was succeeding a more cautious but equally well-founded period of defence. Experts had been absorbed with the idea of doubling till it had become a dangerous commonplace. By a logical reaction they were now preoccupied with methods of turning to disaster the rash or ill-judged movements which an enemy might make in endeavouring to secure an advantage by doubling. Experience had taught them that, when fleets were approximately equal, the admiral who could preserve his line the longest had the surest chance of finding an opportunity for a crushing concentration; and thus in the naval thought of the hour the preservation of the line was becoming a higher consideration than attempts to secure a tactical advantage at the first onset.

It was with these ideas in the air that Rooke went into action. For the formation which Toulouse adopted, D'Estrées, his first captain and the real commander of the fleet, was responsible. The main strength was massed in the centre, and here the line was allowed to sag to leeward in a curve or 'bite.' The object is not certain. The English officers believed it foreboded an attempt to weather their van or rear. Possibly it was accidental, but it is certain that a previous example of the central curve occurred in Tourville's action with Torrington off Beachy Head in 1690, and it is therefore more probable it was deliberate. In order to facilitate a ready response to the movements of the English, D'Estrées formed his line with the wind abeam. This, according to Hoste, was the most vicious of all formations, since in his opinion it laid you open to be doubled in rear by an even inferior enemy with impunity. Rooke made no such attempt. To his cautious nature the new defensive tactics must have been peculiarly convincing. Moreover he must have shared Shovell's opinion that, when fleets were practically equal, a decisive victory was not to be looked for. Nor was this the main object he sought. His preoccupation was to prevent the recapture of Gibraltar, and could he inflict a severe enough blow on Toulouse to prevent his supporting the threatened siege his work was done. On the other hand, if, in seeking by hazardous tactics to

secure a decisive victory, he met with a disaster such as those tactics were now generally recognised to court, he would lose not only Gibraltar but the whole command of the Mediterranean. For since he had no nearer port than Lisbon for retreat, and could not reach even that without passing through the enemy's line, defeat would mean annihilation of his fleet. That he should fight was absolutely necessary, but under all the circumstances, political as well as naval, to avoid defeat was of more importance than to secure an overwhelming victory, and it may well be doubted whether any course could be better than that which Rooke adopted.

Although he had fifty-three of the line to the French fifty-one, and might have doubled with at least two ships, he considered it necessary to have a reserve to watch the galleys. He had therefore contented himself with equalising his line to that of Toulouse and leaving two fifty-gun ships in reserve. As he bore down, the usual trouble happened. Owing to the long time he had had to preserve his line abreast, and the fact that he had to approach the French obliquely, the van ranged ahead of the centre and the centre of the rear, and considerable gaps were left between the divisions. Seeing this, Shovell, so soon as he was within half gun-shot, hove-to to wait for Rooke, and the two opposing vice-admirals lay watching each other in silence, ship to ship. Shovell however was fourth in his line, and Villette third in his, so that the English van was overlapping the French by one ship. Here was an apparent threat to double, and Villette's leading captain passed the word down to him that the whole van must make sail to reach level with the head of the English line.[1] It was now Shovell's turn to fear being doubled, especially as he had in his division only fifteen sail to Villette's seventeen. He therefore seems to have made a corresponding movement ahead, with the

[1] This was certainly the meaning of Villette's movement, which was so variously interpreted by both English and French observers. Villette himself wrote the day after the action, 'On m'avait crié de main en main qu'il fallait que toute l'avant-garde forçast de voiles pour gagner le reste des ennemis.' See his despatch in Monmerqué, *Mémoires du Marquis de Villette*, 350.

result that he still further widened his distance from the centre. It was an advantageous moment which D'Estrées was not likely to let slip, especially as he believed, when he saw Villette making sail, he was already about to profit by it. Toulouse's superiority in the centre warranted some risk, and, if trouble came, there were always the galleys to get him out of it. Toulouse therefore signalled for his whole line to make sail with the intention of passing through the gap between Rooke and Shovell with his own division, and doubling on the British van in order to crush it before the Dutch could get into action. In the meantime, as he knew, his own rear would have ranged up to hold the British centre in check, and the Dutch would be left out of action. Rooke, though he misunderstood Toulouse's purpose, was equal to the occasion. Coming on under a press of sail, he had got within extreme gunshot when he saw the French making sail, and, believing they intended to weather him ahead of his van, he made the signal to heave-to and engage. His own two leading ships, under Rear-Admiral Dilkes, fell on Villette's rear, and thus put the two vans on an equality. He himself engaged Toulouse. The range was much too great to please him, but it was enough to stop the French movement. As the whole British line opened fire and the shot tore through his rigging, Toulouse gave up his well-designed attempt, and the action became general in centre and van, each ship pounding her opposite in the line, and the rear divisions still too distant to engage.

By his cautious tactics Rooke at the outset had deprived Toulouse of any real hope of a decisive victory. It had come down to sheer hard fighting and Rooke had little to fear. Still he had work enough. Ship for ship Rooke's division was seriously overweighted, but stout hearts and good gunnery told, and he held his own in a manner that elicited the most enthusiastic admiration from his Dutch colleagues. In the van, Shovell was able to do better. After four hours' hard pounding, the stern of Villette's flagship blew up, and he had to bear out of the line to extinguish the fire. The rest of his division, as he

says, without any reason followed his example, and with high exultation the British van saw their opponents beaten to leeward. Leake was for closing in upon them and pushing them till the French line was completely broken, so that Toulouse would be compelled to fall back with his centre to avoid the risk of being doubled. There was much to be said for his advice. Rooke by this time sadly needed relief. Not only was the superior weight of the enemy's metal telling severely upon him, but several of his division, which had formed part of the bombarding squadron at Gibraltar, had exhausted their ammunition and had to haul their wind out of the line. Seeing his opportunity, Toulouse began to work up to the gap. It was this crisis that caused Shovell to reject Leake's idea. The danger was acute, and he decided, instead of following his advantage, to draw astern and close up the broken line. It was a piece of seamanship greatly admired at the time, and although, to Leake's disgust, it left him and all the head of the British van with nothing to do, it probably saved the situation for Rooke. About the same time moreover the Dutch got into action, and for the remainder of the afternoon so pressed the French rear that towards sunset it broke to leeward like their van. To prevent isolation Toulouse himself had now to fall back with the centre, and the action came to an end as evening closed down.

Each side had suffered severely, both in men and ships, and all night the two fleets lay where they were, repairing damages. As the hours wore on, the wind began to back till at daybreak it was westerly, and the French had the weather gage. The morning broke with impenetrable haze. When it cleared away they were seen forming line of battle with heads to the northward, and Rooke at once hove-to in line to receive them with his disabled and useless ships to leeward. But it was soon seen that the French did not mean to attack. Galleys were towing shattered ships out of the line, they were still busy repairing rigging, and the British began to follow their example. So the day passed with light airs and calms, and in the evening Rooke called his council.

It was agreed that, damaged and short of ammunition as they were, they could do no good by retaining the position they were occupying. Having lain to leeward of the French a whole day, challenging an attack, they had done all that honour required, and no one could say they had been beaten. There was nothing therefore to prevent their making their way to Gibraltar to protect it and complete their refit. Thither then, after distributing through the fleet what shot remained, they resolved to go, but only on the understanding that, if the French fleet were found between them and their destination, it was not to be avoided. They would reach Gibraltar through the thick of it, or not at all.

It was one of those Quixotic resolutions which no technical consideration can justify. It was thus that Sir Richard Grenville had founded the great tradition when he lost the 'Revenge' at the Azores. The same spirit was still green, and who can say that the proud resolve not to give way was not more than worth the risk it involved? Had the thing been done it would have lived as one of the most heroic and inspiring pages in our history, but fate decreed otherwise. At daybreak it seemed the ordeal was at hand. Some four or five leagues to windward the French fleet shaped itself out of the lifting mists directly across their path. An hour or two later, a breeze came up from the eastward, and in stubborn pride the allies bore on under easy sail as though no enemy was there. Each captain had been told to fight his own way through as best he could, and when his lockers were empty to press on for the rendezvous at Gibraltar, and shift for himself. Some at least had agreed to fire their ships if they could not win through. As the allied fleet came solemnly on, the French re-formed their line to the northward, and in doing so gave ground to leeward. The wind too continued very light, and the result was that by four o'clock it was seen to be impossible to close before dark. Rooke therefore hove-to to let the crippled stragglers close up, and the desperate venture was deferred till the morrow. But when morning broke there was not a sign of the enemy to be seen. Rooke, concluding they had

gone to the Straits mouth or perhaps to Cadiz to refit, at once made sail for Gibraltar. Still, not so much as a scout could be seen in the haze that prevailed, and Rooke held on blindly through the mists till he was forced to bring-to for fear of the land. So they lay all night with little wind and a great easterly sea. In the morning they heard the French had not passed the Straits. Nothing indeed had been seen of them, and the true state of affairs began to be guessed. The bold front Rooke had put on might perhaps have frightened Toulouse into returning to Toulon. Still no one could tell, and it was decided to lie where they were, covering Gibraltar, for forty-eight hours, to let the French attack if they would. The two days passed, and then, assured that Toulouse had abandoned the enterprise, they put into Gibraltar Bay.

So ended the famous episode of Velez-Malaga. Both sides claimed the victory. Toulouse with his fleet cut to pieces had returned to Toulon, boasting that he had driven the allies out of the Mediterranean. *Te Deums* were sung in city and camp, reaching Marlborough's ears on the Danube, and damping his satisfaction with the crushing victory he had won ten days before Rooke fought. But opposite rumours reached him too as he was forming the siege of Landau. 'If the news we have here,' he wrote, 'of Sir George Rooke's having beaten the French fleet . . . be confirmed, we may hope that our affairs in those parts, as well as in Italy, will soon have a different aspect.' His hopes were certainly fulfilled. If battles are to be judged by their fruits, it was Rooke who had won. Toulouse had gone out from Barcelona to retake Gibraltar, and Rooke had successfully barred his way. Not only had he saved the fortress, but it was he who had driven Toulouse from the Mediterranean. For all the *Te Deums* that were sung France was quick to admit her failure. From the moment of Toulouse's return with his object unfulfilled, all faith in the navy was lost; no grand fleet was again attempted, and the command of the Mediterranean was abandoned to the allies.

CHAPTER XXXII

GIBRALTAR AND TOULON

By Rooke's stubborn fight, though the main hope of the naval campaign had not been fulfilled, the hold of the allies upon the Straits was secured. For the time at least they were one step nearer the goal, and England practically single-handed was clinging to it with an almost desperate grasp. When the battle-torn fleet anchored in the bay, the marines ashore fired a running salute round the shattered fortress, and, as evening closed in, lit up triumphant bonfires on its crumbling bastions. But for all the good face they put upon it the future was very dark, and the moment full of anxiety. The advanced troops of the Bourbon army were already crossing the neighbouring heights, the siege was about to begin, and the admirals knew the marines must face it alone. The state of the fleet made it impossible for it to remain. The condition in which the too drastic bombardment had left the fortress was almost as bad, but Hesse was as ready as ever to undertake its defence. All he asked was the marines of the fleet, sixty great guns and sixty gunners, and a détachment of carpenters and armourers to assist in the repair of the shattered works. All this, with six months' provisions, and two bomb-vessels with their tenders, the council-of-war agreed to give him. It was further resolved that all the ships that were fit for winter service should be formed into a squadron under Sir John Leake and be left on the station. The rest were to go home with the exception of those which were too much shattered for the voyage, and these, also under Leake's command, were to stop at Lisbon to be repaired. In a week all was ready, as far as could be, for the forlorn

garrison to defend itself. On August 28, to the sound of another salute, Rooke weighed, and for the first time in history the Mediterranean fleet sailed homewards, leaving a footprint behind it.

For the time it was little more. Even as Rooke sailed the Spanish army was gathered before it, and worse was to be expected. That Louis and the Spaniards would make a violent effort to recover it was a certainty. To the Government in England it was equally obvious that that attempt must not be allowed to succeed. Their precarious hold must be confirmed. True, it was not yet a British possession. It had been taken by an allied force, and the flag of Charles III. floated over it. But it was a British garrison that held it, and from the first there seems to have been little doubt as to what the ultimate fate of the fortress was to be. So small had been the assistance of the allies that its capture was practically a British exploit; for years British statesmen had made no secret of the price they expected for their share in the work of preserving the balance of power; and whether Hapsburg or Bourbon was eventually to secure the crown of Spain there was probably never much idea that England would loose her hold.

So soon as Rooke came home, Sir Charles Hedges, the Secretary of State, wrote to Marlborough for his views. The Duke replied in words that show he already regarded the place as a British possession. 'I find it generally agreed,' he wrote, 'that the post may be of vast use to our trade and navigation in the Mediterranean, and therefore that no cost ought to be spared to maintain it. But I fear the States will not easily be brought at present to bear any share of the expense, nor do I believe the King of Portugal will be willing to spare so many of our men as may be necessary to relieve the present garrison, though I know not otherwise how it can be done, and am not in the meantime without some apprehensions for the place, since it is certain it hath been besieged for some time past, both by sea and land, and in my opinion, nothing but a superior squadron can save it.'[1]

[1] *Despatches*, i. 526, November 3, 1704.

It was true that Hesse and his marines had been hard pressed; but, as Marlborough wrote, the immediate danger was over. Before the end of September a French squadron of ten of the line and nine frigates with three thousand troops and a siege train appeared in Gibraltar Bay. It had been detached from Toulon under the Baron de Pointis to support the Spanish force that was investing the place, and a fortnight later the siege was opened in form. Hesse sent word to Leake begging him to come to his aid at the earliest possible moment. But Leake could not move. He had found the Lisbon dockyard bare. Spars, sails, cordage, everything was wanting. Even the two regiments which, contrary to Marlborough's expectation, the King of Portugal had ordered to Lagos at the first call for help could not be transported to the Straits. With Methuen, the indefatigable admiral strained every nerve to refit his squadron, but it was nearly a month after Hesse's first summons before he could patch it up enough to get to sea.

Fortunately, for some reason that is not known, Pointis did not remain at Gibraltar. Having landed the troops and the siege-train, he passed on to Cadiz, leaving only six frigates behind him. Hesse was thus spared an attack by sea as well as by land, and was able to use one of his bomb-vessels with effect against the enemy's trenches, till one night they pluckily burnt it. On the land side he had not so much to fear. During the respite that had been allowed him he had repaired the damage of the bombardment and had much improved the defences of the north front. Still day by day the enemy's trenches grew nearer and their fire more crushing. Hesse replied by dragging guns up the heights and pouring a plunging fire into the French works, and was able to report the garrison behind the crumbling walls as full of abundant cheerfulness and himself without concern. Had he known what was threatening he could hardly have been so confident.

One dark night at the end of October, a 'forlorn' of five hundred men, led by a goatherd, landed unseen upon the far side of the Rock, and, climbing by the aid of ropes

and ladders to the summit of the Middle Hill, concealed themselves till the signal should be given for action. Their lodgment was but the first step in a most formidable plan of assault. They were to be supported by a boat attack on the new mole, similar to that which had captured the fortress. It was to be in overwhelming strength, and while the garrison were absorbed in repulsing it the concealed force was to fall upon their rear. The design which had so far succeeded could hardly have failed. Everything was ready. Hundreds of boats had been collected about Algeciras; the troops were on the point of embarking; the forlorn, still undiscovered, lay in momentary expectation of the signal, when in the very hour for action Leake came swooping into the Bay. It was a complete surprise. Only one of the French squadron which had been left on guard succeeded in getting to sea, and she was quickly taken. The rest were beached and fired by their crews. The flotilla dared not stir, and the forlorn on Middle Hill had to be left to its fate. Pinched by hunger, they soon had to come out of their hiding place. Directly they were seen, Leake reinforced the garrison, and in an hour or two the whole of the daring five hundred were dead or prisoners.

Thus for the second time Gibraltar was saved. It was to the prompt vigour of the home authorities that the success was largely due. Ten days previously, on October 19, two convoys—one Dutch and one English—had reached the Tagus with stores and transports, and in less than a week Leake had been able to get to sea with thirteen English and six Dutch of the line, besides frigates and victuallers. Thus he not only relieved the place but was able also to supply it, and by his restless activity to afford incalculable help to the garrison. With a naval brigade he undertook the whole defence of the new mole, he enfiladed the enemy's trenches with his frigates, he continually threatened their camp at Algeciras with his boats, and generally harassed the siege operations in every direction, and enheartened the dwindling garrison with the presence of his ships. Constant reports that Pointis was preparing to come out of Cadiz

told him his proper place was at sea. The winter storms wasted half his ground tackle and made his position in the Bay still more dangerous. Yet, in response to the urgent entreaties of the hard pressed officers ashore, he clung to Gibraltar and his galling work. Every day his own danger and that of the garrison increased, yet it was not till he heard that a second relief force had reached the Tagus and was about to sail for Gibraltar with only a couple of frigates to escort it that he put to sea to cover the passage of the transports and storeships past Cadiz. Even then, ill-manned as he was, he left a hundred men behind him to assist the overworked marines.

By this time the garrison was again reduced to extremity. Through sickness and casualties Hesse had not a thousand men sound enough to mount guard. The safe arrival of the relieving force was a matter of life and death, and Pointis had a fresh fleet ready to stop it. Everything had to be put to the hazard, and Leake, in spite of the condition he was in, and although he knew Pointis to be in superior force, had resolved to appear before Cadiz and offer his adversary battle while the transports passed. But fate was against him. Adverse winds kept him in the Straits, nor could he get free before he heard Pointis was out and had fallen upon the convoy. Seeing a fleet off Cape Espartel flying English and Dutch colours, the transports had borne up to join it. Fortunately it fell calm, and the French, trusting too much to their false colours, began prematurely to take up an enveloping formation. The commodore of the escort immediately took alarm. It was 'Out sweeps and boats!' in a moment, and, before Pointis could close, all the transports but two were out of his clutches. Some two thousand infantry besides engineers and all kinds of stores reached the Bay in safety, and Gibraltar was again relieved. Pointis returned discomfited to Cadiz, and Leake at the end of the year went back to the Tagus to refit.[1]

The grip of the sea powers was closing on the gate of the Mediterranean, and Louis began to grow desperate.

[1] Leake's *Life of Leake*; Sayer, *History of Gibraltar*, p. 138, *note*.

With the forces at his disposal he had looked upon the recapture of Gibraltar as a matter of a few weeks. When the first efforts failed, the whole situation on the Portuguese frontier had been sacrificed to form the siege. Still it not only held out but was growing stronger every day, and it was clear that if it was not taken before the spring the Bourbon position in Spain could not be maintained. Louis resolved therefore to supersede the Spanish general by offering the services of his own commander-in-chief, Marshal Tessé. The result was only to make matters worse. The Spaniards were deeply hurt. In January 1705, they twice flung themselves prematurely upon the north front, determined to capture the place before Tessé arrived. Both attacks failed, owing—so the Spaniards said—to the French regiments refusing to do their duty. Meanwhile, disease and the terrors of a winter siege were sweeping off their men in hundreds. Leake at Lisbon, on the other hand, was in constant touch with the garrison. He kept throwing in fresh supplies and troops, and Pointis, idle in Cadiz, stirred no finger to prevent him.

Tessé, the moment he arrived, took in the situation at a glance. He saw that without the command of the sea the enterprise was hopeless. Assuming the character of Sancho Panza addressing his master, Don Quixote, he wrote in humorous despair to the minister Pontchartrain to tell him so. His disgust at the inactivity of Pointis he unloaded upon Condé with equal playfulness. 'The English,' he wrote, 'at any rate teach us that you may keep the sea in all weathers, for they promenade it like the swans in your river at Chantilly.'[1] Still his advent gave things a more formidable turn. The siege was renewed on more scientific lines, and, what was worse, Pointis, upon peremptory orders from Madrid, hardened his heart to come round to Gibraltar from Cadiz with fourteen sail. The Marshal had now what he needed, and he strenuously prepared for a grand attack by sea and land.

[1] Tessé to Pontchartrain, Feb. 13, 1705 (n.s.), *Lettres de Tessé*, p. 230. Same to Condé, Feb. 26, *Mémoires de Tessé*, p. 138 *et seq.*

This was the one thing that Hesse feared, and both Leake and Methuen grew no less anxious. Months before they had been told that Shovell was at Spithead about to sail with a squadron that would put Gibraltar beyond danger. Now it was known that he was not coming for the present. Instead, a division of his fleet was to be detached under Sir Thomas Dilkes and Sir Thomas Hardy, but even of this there was as yet no news. In the Tagus, though Leake and Methuen were stirring every nerve, things were far from ready for sea. The ambassador protested to the home Government that since he had been told to spare nothing, so that Gibraltar was kept, he had nearly ruined himself. 'The importance of Gibraltar to England,' he wrote, 'hath made me boggle at nothing.' Its importance, he ventured to add, would be as great after the peace as during the war. 'My opinion,' he urged, 'is that if the circumstances of Europe should force a peace without the monarchy of Spain being left in the possession of Charles the Third, England must never part with Gibraltar, which will always be a pledge of our commerce and privileges in Spain.'[1] Leake's activity elicited his warmest praises; but for all the admiral's efforts it was not till February 25 that he was ready to put to sea. The very next day he was rejoiced with the sight of Dilkes's squadron putting into the river with a convoy, which brought everything he wanted. And not only that, for Dilkes presented him with his commission as Vice-Admiral of the White and Commander-in-Chief in the Mediterranean. A Portuguese squadron, such as it was, was also ready, and within a week he was speeding for Gibraltar under a press of sail with thirty-five of the line.

In vain the unhappy Pointis had protested against what would certainly happen if he was compelled to leave Cadiz before he was reinforced from Toulon. Neither Madrid nor Versailles would listen. Both courts were desperate, and he had to remain at Gibraltar for Tessé's combined attack. His own idea was to cruise in the Straits and stop reliefs till his force could be strengthened.

[1] See his despatch of Mar. 7, 1705 (n.s.) in *Add. MSS.* 28056.

Lying in the Bay, he knew he was at the mercy both of the weather and Leake. All he could do by laying a line of signal stations as far as Cadiz he did, but all was of no avail. Both the dangers he feared fell on him at once. Before the combined attack was ripe, a gale came up out of the Atlantic and drove two-thirds of his squadron from their anchors away to leeward up the Straits. He himself with his flagship, the three-decker 'Lys,' and four others of the line managed to cling on under Cape Cabrita. There he was still lying when suddenly, without a note of warning from his signal stations, the head of a fleet loomed up out of the blinding mist. It was Leake coming down on the dying gale. To the wild swans of the north it had come like a friend, and Pointis knew he was doomed. He had scarcely time to cut his cables before they were upon him. One ship immediately struck; two others were taken by boarding after a fair fight; Pointis and the fifth vessel fought their way valiantly through, but only to be driven ashore and forced to burn. The rest were chased as far as Malaga, where they had taken refuge; but at the sound of the fight they had made sail again and were soon beyond reach in Toulon. With these tidings Leake returned to Gibraltar, and as its deliverer entered the Bay a triumphant salute from the guns of the fortress proclaimed that the grip of England was set at last hard and fast upon the Straits.

It was no less a thing than that. Tessé frankly recognised that the game was lost. Whatever Madrid or Versailles might say, it was madness to add to the frightful loss of life and resources which the attempt had cost. Before the end of the month, therefore, he raised the siege and returned to his task on the Portuguese frontier, now almost as hopeless as the other.[1]

Marlborough had so far achieved his aim, and the situation for which he had been ready to sacrifice his first campaign in Flanders was in effective operation. France was faced on her furthest frontier in the Peninsula with

[1] Leake's *Life of Leake*; Paul Methuen's 'Account of his Voyage from Faro to Gibraltar,' March 19 to April 14, 1705 (n.s.), *Add. MSS.* 20093, f. 273 *et seq.*; Guérin, iv. 124; Duro, vi. 62.

a war nourished from the sea; and the Mediterranean, instead of being an easy means of communication that would co-ordinate her operations in Spain and Italy, had become for her an obstacle, and for her enemies a pathway she could no longer bar. At the time, the momentous revolution which had been set on foot was barely recognised—at least by public opinion. The capture of Gibraltar was rated at first far below its true value—partly no doubt because of the injudicious efforts of Rooke's friends to cry it up as a rival to Blenheim, but more perhaps because by itself it really was comparatively of small importance. As a station for the protection of commerce it was of course invaluable, and for this reason merchants highly valued it as they had valued Tangier. But strategists had long recognised that for the command of the Mediterranean a port in the Straits only capable of receiving a cruiser squadron was useless unless it was supplemented by the possession of a place that could be made into a real naval port—a place, that is, where a fleet could receive its winter refit. The prospect of destroying Toulon seemed as remote as ever, and each year it grew more evident that so long as the winter squadron had to retire every autumn to Lisbon, it was impossible to make the command of the Mediterranean tell effectively upon the war. So soon as the British admiral's back was turned, the Toulon privateers and cruisers, with Minorca for a harbour of refuge, could come out and play havoc down the Carlist coast, while at the same time the French transports and storeships could pass where they were wanted without interruption, and the commerce of Marseilles could proceed with scarcely less disturbance. Under such conditions the war, both in Catalonia and Italy, might drag on interminably, and the Pope and the other Italian Princes of Bourbon sympathies could never be made to feel the danger of their irreconcilable attitude.

For those who knew, therefore, Gibraltar was but a savoury morsel to whet their appetite for more. British Mediterranean officers had long coveted Minorca. They knew it well, and in the spacious inlet of Port Mahon

they recognised the finest harbour in the Mediterranean. Events were marking it still more clearly as the real key of the situation so long as Toulon remained intact. Every seaman and every soldier on the spot saw that the course of the war was turning on its possession. Louis had increased its defences and garrisoned them with a picked body of his own marines, and the old cry for its possession began to be dinned into the ears of the British Government with ever increasing importunity.

The very year after Leake had finally frustrated the attempt to regain Gibraltar the ideas of the Mediterranean men were put forth in an anonymous pamphlet, whose popularity and influence are attested by two rapid editions. It was entitled 'An Inquiry into the Causes of our Naval Miscarriages.' The trouble began—so the author asserts—immediately after the failure at Cadiz, when we ought at once to have passed on up the Straits and taken possession of Port Mahon. There, he argues, we might always have kept a fleet in the Mediterranean superior to the French, and he proceeds to set out what strategical results would have followed. By stopping the French communications with Italy, the war there could quickly have been brought to an end. The trade of Marseilles might have been ruined and our own have taken its place. Majorca, with its hardy population of mariners—most famous of privateersmen—being fervent haters of France and Castile, would have declared for Charles III. Naples, Sicily, and Sardinia, finding the French unable to protect their trade, would soon have followed suit. Not only should we have dominated the Barbary states, but we could easily and naturally have ousted France from the leading position at the Porte. Other omissions he mentions—such as neglecting vigorous enough action against the French and Spanish colonies; but before and above all he places this shortsighted failure to seize an adequate naval station in the Mediterranean. 'I shall only add,' he concludes, 'that had we, according to the maxims of all wise invaders, first secured ourselves of a port and place of arms upon the skirts of their

dominion, as we might easily have done by seizing Port Mahon, we should have prevented the fatal mismanagement of the war in Italy and Spain, where sometimes the French and sometimes the allies have all the advantage of one another by a sudden run, as happens in a game of football; and had we kept that port after the war was over, which could not well be denied us, we might have made it a magazine and station for ships to command the Mediterranean and protect our Straits trade, and should thereby have been in a condition by a naval power (without incurring any danger from standing armies) to hold the balance of Europe in our hands, which, as it is our natural province, is England's greatest security and glory.'[1]

Here for the first time we have an explicit public declaration of England's true position in Europe, and of the simple policy that was necessary to secure it. It is no wonder that such sentiments rapidly carried conviction and solidified into a settled purpose. But, clearly as the expedient was indicated, it was long before circumstances permitted its achievement. One reason for this was undoubtedly that it did not commend itself to Marlborough's drastic notions of warfare. Secondary or masking operations never found favour with him so long as there was any possibility of a blow direct at the heart of things. He was still clinging to his original plan. No sooner was Gibraltar secure than he was for completing what he had carried so far by flinging the whole weight of the British navy upon Toulon. This was his idea for the naval campaign of 1705, but the sailors pronounced the operation impracticable, and with his usual deference to expert knowledge he gave way.[2] But it was only to bide his time, nor did he abandon his fundamental objective and adopt Minorca as the nearest equivalent until he had actually tried Toulon and failed.

[1] *Harleian Miscellany*, vol. xi. pp. 5–28, 2nd edition, 1707.

[2] See Tessé's 'Memorandum of the projects of the enemy,' April 15, 1705 (*Mémoires*, ii. 169). He had apparently received from Versailles a complete report of what passed at the Supreme Council of War held before the Queen early in 1705.

Had the Emperor and Savoy been able to rise to his height of thought and been ready to support the cardinal operation with all their force, there is little doubt, seeing the condition Toulon was in, that success would have been won. But they were each too intent on securing the fruits of victory to combine in an adequate effort or to make the necessary sacrifices to achieve it. So, instead of dealing a blow that, if successful, must have brought France to her knees, the energy of the maritime powers was frittered away in a premature effort to place the Hapsburg King on the Spanish throne.

So the war took a new turn, which kept England from confirming her hold upon the Mediterranean. In the first week in August, 1705, the Earl of Peterborough, to whom was committed the new plan of operations, and Shovell with their long-delayed fleet put into Gibraltar, 'the ruins of which place,' says a contemporary chronicler, 'were a plain demonstration of the great courage, industry, and indefatigable care wherewith the Prince of Darmstadt had defended it against the united force of France and Castile.' In the British flagship was Charles III., bound for Catalonia, to begin from there the conquest of his kingdom. For awhile it is true the astounding boldness of Peterborough's operations met with a success that seemed to justify the enterprise. Barcelona fell miraculously in September, and Shovell went home, leaving Charles king in Catalonia. Leake remained behind with the usual winter squadron, but as there was as yet no British port within the Straits, it had still to be based on Lisbon, and little had really been done to improve the situation in the Mediterranean.

It was there, in spite of the rejection of his design on Toulon, that Marlborough's eyes were more earnestly fixed than ever. It was there he saw more clearly each campaign the vital point of the war lay, and he knew that if for the moment the allies had the best of it in Catalonia, in Italy things were as bad as they could be. Savoy was almost in despair, and Marlborough was doing all he knew to strengthen the cause in the two seats of the Mediterranean struggle. Heinsius, the Grand Pensionary

of the States, who alone of Dutch statesmen could see to Marlborough's horizon, entirely shared his view of their importance. 'I am sure,' he wrote to Marlborough, 'that on these two points will turn the good or evil fortune of the common cause.'[1] The French were equally alive to the situation, and it was known that a strenuous effort from Toulon was to be made to recover Barcelona before the allies could resume command of the adjacent seas. Orders were sent down to Leake at Lisbon to do his utmost to prevent it, and Byng was hurried to sea with a squadron to reinforce him. Leake at once moved down to Gibraltar, but there he heard that Toulouse was before Barcelona with a fleet he could not hope to face. Tessé moreover had suddenly invested the place by land in overwhelming force. Peterborough was shut out and powerless, and it was clear that it would be touch and go whether the reinforcements arrived from England in time to save the Carlists' capital.

At home, having done all in his power for Catalonia, Marlborough was deep in a remarkable scheme for the salvation of Savoy and Northern Italy. It was nothing less than a design to transfer thither from the Netherlands army twenty thousand men and himself to take the command. Apart from his growing conviction that the struggle could only be definitely decided in the ancient centre of dominion, the exasperating way in which his late campaigns had been spoiled and even ruined by the perversity of the Dutch Government and the German generals made him long to be alone with Eugene. For to Eugene was to be committed this year the command of the Imperial army in North Italy, and together once more the Duke knew they could carry all before them. With Lombardy and Piedmont in his hands and the main fleet on the coast of Provence, he saw his way to a dash into France which would give him Toulon, set the Cevennes once more in a blaze, and cut Louis off from the Mediterranean and all that it meant to the French power. Bold and heroic as his proposal was, he had

[1] Heinsius to Marlborough, January 18 to 29, 1706, Vreede, *Correspondance Diplomatique et Militaire* &c. p. 1.

almost succeeded in persuading the States to consent, when the Margrave of Baden, not having received the reinforcements he expected, fell back behind the Rhine and exposed the left flank of the Netherlands' position. The Dutch at once took alarm. Ten thousand men were all they would consent to detach for Italy, and that only on condition that Marlborough remained to command in Flanders. Without abandoning his idea, as we shall see, Marlborough again bowed his head to the disappointment, and, after his wont, set himself to make the best of things as they stood. His reward was the immortal campaign of Ramilies, which gave him the whole of Flanders from the Meuse to the sea.

Meanwhile Barcelona was reduced to the direst extremity. The castle of Montjuich had fallen, and Peterborough and Leake were at Valencia, not daring to proceed further with their inadequate fleet. It was not till April that they saw Byng's welcome sails. By that time Tessé had actually made his lodgment on the counterscarp of the city, and was preparing for the final assault. There was not a moment to lose, and no sooner had Byng joined than a general chase was ordered. With every rag they could carry, the captains raced for Barcelona without order or thought of the consequences, so long as the leading ships could fasten their teeth in the French fleet and prevent its escape. It was a well-judged risk. Byng, having the cleanest ships, was the first to arrive, and it was to see Toulouse's rearguard hull-down towards Toulon. The allied admirals had missed their fight, but Barcelona was saved. At the first whisper of their approach, Toulouse, repeating Tourville's move, had fled and left Tessé to his fate. For two days the gallant marshal strove to snatch victory from defeat. But on the third he was compelled to raise the siege precipitately, leaving all his siege train, stores, and wounded behind. The success was complete, and on May 10, two days before Ramilies was fought, King Charles was able to write to Marlborough an effusive letter of thanks for the new and convincing proofs of zeal and concern for his service that he had so successfully displayed.

The immediate result of this operation was that the allies were able to advance from the Portuguese frontier to Madrid and proclaim Charles in the Castilian capital. On the Mediterranean side Cartagena surrendered, Alicante was taken by storm, Ivica and Majorca tendered their allegiance to Leake. Minorca was ready to do the same, and Charles had particularly urged its reduction upon the admiral. Peterborough had supported the King's proposal, but Leake replied that the French garrison in Port Mahon was too strong for his marines to master without the assistance of a military force. To meet the objection Peterborough was for joining him with the necessary troops, but, before he could act, orders arrived, so he said, that he was to go to Italy to enhearten the Duke of Savoy and consult with him and Eugene for the next year's campaign. The enterprise consequently had to be postponed till his return. By that time it was too late. With the approach of winter Leake had to leave the Mediterranean, and the finest port within the Straits had to be left in the hands of the French.[1]

Though every one recognised the strategical importance of the place, the French sea power seemed too much broken for it to cause much anxiety. Moreover there was larger game on foot. As the first fruits of his resounding victory, Marlborough at last saw his way to realising the great idea towards which he had never ceased to work. Three days before Ramilies he had written to disclose it to the Emperor and to explain why he had been compelled to abandon it temporarily. 'I still keep my views,' he added, 'in that quarter, knowing how important it is to you and the allies to keep the upper hand in Italy. We shall have twenty-eight thousand men in the pay of England and the States, and I shall try to increase them and go myself at the end of the campaign so as to be early afield there next campaign.'[2]

[1] The papers relating to this incident are printed in Leake's *Life of Leake*, pp. 214, 259, 265. A letter from Wassenaar, the Dutch admiral, to Leake on the subject is misplaced among the *Leake Papers* of 1708, *Add. MSS.* 5443, f. 82.

[2] *Despatches*, ii. 494, May 9. Cf. his letter to same effect to Sinzendorf, *ibid.* p. 497.

No sooner was Ramilies fought than he was busy smoothing the way. Early in the year a French refugee, the Comte de Guiscard, had proposed a descent upon Rochefort and the Charente with the object of penetrating to the Cevennes. Nothing could better prepare the ground for Marlborough's great stroke, and to this object the main fleet under Shovell was devoted. The landing force was to be composed mainly of French refugees; but so soon as Marlborough saw his position secure in Flanders he detached some of his own regiments to stiffen it. As the fleet was not ready for Shovell to hoist his flag till the middle of July, there was small chance of its doing anything effective. Every similar expedition in modern times had failed, and we may well believe that Marlborough expected but little directly. In any case it would serve as a diversion for both Italy and Catalonia, and perhaps he foresaw how the move would play into his hands. This it certainly did. Owing to the Dutch contingent being behind time, Shovell missed the last of the summer weather, and was kept windbound in Torbay till the first week in September. By that time it was obviously too late for a campaign in Guienne, and Marlborough astutely proposed that Shovell should carry on and strengthen the cause in the Peninsula. The States could find no reason for refusing, and Marlborough was a long stride nearer his purpose.

At the same hour came news of still higher moment for the great end. In Italy Eugene had crowned his reputation with his most brilliant and successful campaign. All the summer Turin had been besieged, and it seemed that nothing could save it. But Eugene had achieved the almost hopeless task. By manœuvres of extraordinary brilliance he had driven in the covering army, and as Shovell lay windbound in Torbay he had relieved the beleaguered city. A fortnight later Charles III. was proclaimed in Milan, but Eugene did not rest. His victory was followed by a series of rapid and effective movements, which before winter set in drove the French clean out of Northern Italy, and left the way open for an invasion of France from the south-east as completely

as Marlborough's campaign had exposed it on the north.

Unfortunately, on the Catalonian side, things were not so well. Even before Peterborough had left on his real or assumed mission to Savoy, the tide had begun to turn. Charles and his generals were learning that to defeat Spanish armies was not to conquer Spain, and that to proclaim a king in her capital was not to detach her people from the crown of their choice. The nation rose in guerilla bands, Madrid had to be abandoned, and when Leake was forced to retire to Lisbon at the approach of winter, the French were able to take full advantage of the situation. Shovell did not reach the Tagus till January 1707, but he at once hurried on and landed some seven thousand men for Peterborough. It was all the fleet could do, for a higher call compelled his immediate return to Lisbon.

By this time Marlborough's long-deferred plan was ripe, and the hour of Toulon had come. The great Mediterranean arsenal was to be the main objective of the coming campaign. Savoy and Eugene with the subsidised troops and an Imperialist army were to attack it by land. Shovell with the main fleet was to support them by sea, and Marlborough, although he had been forced to give up the idea of conducting the attempt himself, was preparing to back it up by a simultaneous invasion from the north. Shovell therefore was under orders to return to his base at Lisbon and prepare the fleet for its share in the work. In his absence Galway, who was now commander-in-chief in Spain, made a desperate attempt to recover Madrid, but it only ended in the fatal day of Almanza, and the Hapsburg King was once more confined to his Catalonian dominion. Such warfare could indeed only be compared to the sudden runs of a game of football, and could lead to no definite result. It was feared that the crushing victory of the French would allow Louis to detach troops from Spain to the defence of Provence, and it was clear everything depended on success, sudden and swift, at Toulon. Shovell returned to the Carlist coast in time to pick up the fugitives from

the fatal battle, and then passed on up the Straits to join hands with Savoy.

Had Marlborough been permitted to make his invasion, had the Emperor been loyal, or had Eugene even been left a free hand, there is little doubt that the *coup de grâce* would have been given. But the stars in their courses fought against the great design. The Dutch would not consent to Marlborough's invasion from the north, and the Emperor refused to co-operate adequately with Savoy. The straits to which France had been reduced in the last campaign had caused Louis to make tentative efforts at peace, and the Emperor, mindful of the partition treaties, was obstinately determined to get Naples into his hands before negotiations could begin. To this end, regardless of the common cause for which he had done so little, he secured by a convention with Louis the neutrality of Northern Italy, which left him free to detach a force to the south. In vain the British Government protested they could take Naples for him at any moment when Toulon was once destroyed. The Emperor would not listen. It was even believed in England that he and others were by no means eager to see Marlborough's plan succeed, since the destruction of Toulon would leave the English and Dutch in complete command of the Mediterranean.[1] The end of it was that Eugene eventually joined the army of invasion with little beyond his sword.

Even so he might have succeeded had he not been hampered with the Duke of Savoy for a colleague. Tessé, who was in command of the French army of the south, had an interminable line of frontier to protect with a wholly inadequate force. He could not tell where Eugene meant to strike. By a well-conceived feint he was made to believe that it was Franche-Comté that was threatened, and it was not till the enemy were almost crossing the frontier that he recognised what the real objective was. So well had Eugene masked his aim, and so rapid was his advance with the co-operation of the fleet, that but for his

[1] Alexander Cunningham, *Hist. of Great Britain from the Revolution to the Accession of George I.*, ii. 103.

colleague's hesitation he would certainly have reached Toulon, which on the land side was practically undefended, before Tessé could have gathered a garrison strong enough to resist even his diminished force. As it was, it was a neck and neck race. So great was the danger that the whole Toulon squadron to the number of over fifty of the line were sunk to prevent their being burnt. Only two were kept as floating batteries. But the last precious hours were wasted by Savoy's stubbornness when Eugene was actually within striking distance. Tessé was able to complete an entrenched camp and to collect a garrison for it that made surprise impossible. Without the force that had been detached to Naples a siege was hopeless. For some time, with no small skill and courage, both fleet and army clung to the attempt, but a retreat soon became inevitable.

Thus one of the best planned and most necessary operations of the war came to a fruitless issue. The situation in the Mediterranean was still incomplete, and it became clearer than ever that, until the French power of disturbance was removed by some more feasible means, the 'game of football' would never end.

CHAPTER XXXIII

MINORCA

TOULON remained a thorn in the side of the allies. In spite of the destruction that had been caused by Shovell's bombardment and by the drastic measures that had been taken for the defence, its secondary possibilities remained untouched. Marlborough's great design, which ought to have lived as a worthy pendant to the immortal campaign of Blenheim, had failed, and he and every one saw that they must now fall back upon the minor expedient of masking the fortress, they could not destroy, with a naval force permanently on the spot.

Acutely conscious of the main source of their difficulties, the English generals in Spain, in conjunction with the Court of Barcelona, began urging the English Government to keep a strong squadron all the winter within the Straits. Marlborough, convinced that it was now the only possible cure, was backing the proposal, and had given Charles's agents to understand that the Queen would certainly consent, if a suitable port were provided for a base. This was the old difficulty. Spezzia was offered, but Marlborough assured the powers concerned that it was no good, for the British admirals considered it unfit to provide for the accommodation and requirements of ships of the line. Again he showed he was no man to force naval officers into action to which they objected on technical grounds, and the danger of overriding their opinions had just been emphasised in a way that could not be disguised.

In returning home as usual in the late autumn, Shovell had encountered the catastrophe which he and his school had always foreboded. The difficulties of the navigation caused him to miss the entrance of the Channel, and the

fleet fell among the Scilly rocks. Though most of them escaped, his own flagship was cast away, and he himself was found gasping on the shore of a lonely cove by a wrecker and murdered for his rings. The loss of so fine and renowned an old seaman could not but make a profound impression. His place for the ensuing campaign was to be filled by Sir John Leake, and though Marlborough keenly desired that he should have authority to leave a winter squadron in the Mediterranean when his campaign was over, he would not hear of so unprecedented a measure being forced upon him against his better judgment.

It is thoroughly characteristic of the greatest soldier and war minister that England has ever produced, that he fully understood where his own judgment ended, and where he must bow to more expert knowledge. 'I am making my utmost endeavour,' he wrote to King Charles at the end of June 1708, 'to get the Queen to allow a squadron to winter in the Mediterranean, although I perceive the naval officers are of a contrary opinion, and that they do not think that ships of war will be entirely safe in the port of Spezzia, where they even fear lack of provisions and other stores necessary to put the ships from time to time in a condition for sea.' On such a point as this the seamen's word was law to him, and he took care, for all his fair words to the King, that the navy men should not be forced from their legitimate position by the insistence of the Carlist Court. A week or two later he received the official memorandum of the Admiralty on the practicability of the new proposal, and sent it on to General Stanhope, who had succeeded Galway as British commander-in-chief in Catalonia. 'I send it,' he wrote, 'only for your information, that you may by your insinuations prevent the Court's putting too great a stress upon it, in case it should be found impracticable, for it is certain our sea officers are the best judges of what may be done with safety in this case.' Then in a postscript he adds with his own hand, 'I am so entirely convinced that nothing can be done effectually without the fleet that I conjure you if possible to take Port Mahon

and to let me have your reasons for any other port that I may continue to press them in England.'

At the same time he wrote to Count Wratislaw, the Emperor's minister, 'There is no one but admits the necessity of having a winter squadron in the Mediterranean; but when all is said and done we must submit to the judgment of the admirals and sea officers on the safety of the port and other accommodation for ships of the line. It is certain they are the best judges, and Sir John Leake has order for it; but I must tell you plainly that, so far as I can learn, these gentlemen do not believe any port safe and fit except that of Mahon. I have written to Mr. Stanhope to do his utmost to make himself master of it, after which there will be no difficulty. And pray permit me to tell you once more that all you can write on this subject and all the orders that can be given in England must be entirely subservient to the judgment of the fleet. That is quite simple to understand.' To Count Sinzendorf, another Imperial minister, he sent the same information and the same caution. 'The sea service,' he said, 'is not so easily managed as that of land. There are many more precautions to take, and you and I are not capable of judging them.' Still of the paramount strategical necessity no one was a better judge than himself, and on the sailors' conditions he continued to press on the enterprise. Early in September he assured the Marquis de Prie, the Imperial envoy to the Pope, that he had long been convinced of the necessity of the squadron, and that the only difficulty was the admirals' insisting on a proper port being provided for it. 'But,' he added, 'I have made representations so strong that I flatter myself we shall attain our object.'[1]

His confidence was not unfounded. Stanhope was already in motion. Just as the campaign in Catalonia was coming to an end he had received Marlborough's urgent exhortation as well as orders direct from the Government to the same effect, and, seeing the enterprise on which his heart had long been set within his reach, he hurried from the camp at Cevera with every man that could be

[1] *Marlborough Despatches*, iii. 465, 471; iv. 81–2, 118–9, 213.

spared from the narrowed Carlist frontier, and in four days was at Barcelona busy with transports.

From the fleet he had fair hope of assistance; but this can only have arisen from a knowledge that Leake for some time past had been anxious to see Port Mahon at the disposal of the fleet. The admiral, in spite of what Marlborough wrote, had certainly no 'order for it' in his official instructions. They contained nothing special beyond general directions to do his best for the naval and military situation in the Mediterranean.[1] On entering the Straits therefore he had as usual busied himself with supporting the 'game of football' in Catalonia by transporting troops and stores, and cutting up the French coastwise communications. While thus engaged he had received more definite orders from home. The Pope, he was told, had been supplying funds for an invasion of the Queen's dominions by 'the pretended Prince of Wales,' and had even been offering prayers publicly for his success. It was an insult the Queen could not pass over, and he was therefore to take the first opportunity of making a demonstration before Civita Vecchia and demanding the immediate payment of four hundred thousand crowns on pain of the last rigours of military execution in the Papal territory. The orders were accompanied by a covering letter from Sunderland explaining that he was really to carry them out, if it could be done without prejudice to the main object of the campaign, by which was meant the support of the Court of Barcelona.[2] At the same time Charles, whose Court and army were feeling acutely the pinch of his straitened frontier, begged him to undertake the reduction of Sardinia with its inexhaustible granary and its invaluable port of Cagliari. By the tenor of Leake's instructions he had no doubt that Charles's request should take precedence of the demonstration at Civita Vecchia, and especially as the Dutch admiral had insisted on referring the matter home before he would consent to join it. To Sardinia therefore the fleet proceeded. After a short

[1] Leake's *Life of Leake*, p. 297.

[2] *Ibid.* p. 334; *Leake Papers*, iv. 28, in *Add. MSS.* 5443. The order was dated May 4.

bombardment Cagliari capitulated, and Leake was able to inform Charles and his generals that the resources of the island and all the war material he had captured were at their disposal.

Leake's welcome report had just reached Catalonia when Stanhope received his directions about Minorca. With his own orders had come a sealed packet for Leake, which he did not doubt contained instructions for the co-operation of the fleet, and as it was now at liberty Stanhope felt he could count on its support. Still Leake's movements were uncertain. Charles had written begging him, so soon as Sardinia was reduced, to fetch from Naples, which was now in his possession, four thousand troops of those which had been so unhappily detached from Eugene's Toulon expedition. For the moment therefore, when every hour was precious, Stanhope was in no little difficulty. It is true, at the King's request, Leake had left half a dozen ships behind at Barcelona for its protection, but over these neither Stanhope nor Charles had further authority. There were sufficient transports, however, and Stanhope embarked in them what troops and guns he had secured. At the same time he sent word to Majorca, ordering more guns and troops to be ready to meet him, and with the King's congratulations to Leake and the sealed packet from home went a letter from Stanhope saying that he assumed the secret despatch related to Minorca and that he intended to make a lodgment there, and await the arrival of his fleet.[1] Whether the captains at Barcelona would take the risk of assisting him or not, he meant to go. One of them fortunately was his brother, and he and another resolved to stand by him. Seeing him so determined, the others could not long resist the temptation, and the last week in August the expedition sailed.

Meanwhile Leake had moved out of Cagliari Bay to Pola to water his fleet and be ready for action. His position was one of considerable difficulty. The Dutch admiral had received orders forbidding him to assist in coercing the Pope, the troops at Naples were not ready

[1] Stanhope to Leake, Barcelona, August 13–24, 1708, Mahon, *War of Succession*, App. p. lxxi.

to embark, and he had therefore sent to Barcelona for further orders. It was already the middle of August, fully late for any new operation, and, as no orders came, Leake made up his mind to deal with the Pope at once and alone. A council of war was already assembling to formally confirm his resolve. Everything was ready for sailing. His ultimatum to the Pope was actually drafted, when a felucca came in to the fleet with Stanhope's summons and the sealed packet for the admiral. So far from bidding him support the attempt on Minorca, it contained a still more urgent order to punish the Pope if he could do so without prejudice to the main scheme. It was an extremely delicate situation, and so soon as Leake had read the papers he laid the whole of them before his council. Among others was an extract from Sunderland's letter to Stanhope, in which he informed the general of Charles's prayers for a winter squadron being kept within the Straits. 'Every one is ready to agree,' wrote the minister, 'that nothing could be of greater use, but the great question is: How shall such a squadron be secure in any port of Italy from insults of the French by a superior force from Toulon? . . I conclude upon this head, unless we can take Toulon from the French or Port Mahon, this thing is in no way practicable with safety.' As there was no hope of Savoy's helping with Toulon he concluded: 'It remains that you should dispose yourselves to be masters of Port Mahon.'[1]

This and the general directions about the main scheme were all the authority there was for supporting Stanhope. Still, as the general frankly wrote, it was quite impossible to reduce Minorca without Leake's assistance, since his force, though strong enough to effect a lodgment, was too weak to reduce Port Mahon. Under the circumstances it is a high testimony to the sailor's grasp of the vital essentials of the situation that there appears to have been no hesitation as to what ought to be done. Naval strategists, as we have seen, knew well enough that no Prince in Italy could resist the pressure of a winter squadron acting from a base within the Straits, and it was unanimously decided

[1] *Life of Leake*, June 22, 1708.

as the matter of the first importance to proceed at once to Minorca and to leave the Pope and the troops at Naples till Port Mahon was secured. It was a high and lucid resolution not only to the great credit of the officers concerned, but worthy of remembrance as a lasting example of sagacious naval judgment for all time.[1]

Leake's action was as prompt as his resolution. As he had been on the point of sailing, there was no need for a moment's delay. So the Holy Father, as the admiral called him in his undelivered ultimatum, had respite from the British guns, and so rapid was the admiral's movement on his new quest that he was before Port Mahon on August 25. Stanhope was not there. Leake therefore sent two third-rates on to Majorca to pick up the troops and stores which Stanhope had told him were to be ready. They returned with their charge on September 1, and two days later Stanhope appeared with the main body of the force.

He found everything prepared for him. Leake had already marked and surveyed a landing place, and had ascertained the exact strength of the garrison. It consisted of a thousand men, half of whom were picked French marines, but the rest an old Minorca regiment that could be counted on to do no mischief. But Leake was still in a difficulty. The season was far advanced, and, though he had authority to leave a winter squadron behind him, he himself was under orders to go home early enough to avoid a repetition of Shovell's disaster. It was therefore high time that he was on the wing. Still he knew too well the high value of the enterprise in hand to spoil it if it could possibly be helped. He therefore decided to place at Stanhope's disposal a strong squadron under Sir Edward Whitaker, the officer

[1] These details are important in view of the fact that nearly all general histories from Boyer's *Queen Anne* downwards practically ignore Leake's and the fleet's share in the exploit. Lord Mahon's account, which does not mention the fleet at all, as though Leake had not been present, is particularly disingenuous. General Stanhope's part was quite brilliant enough without disguising his dependence on Leake for his success (*War of Succession in Spain*, 255–6). In the *Life of Leake* the case for the fleet against Boyer is set out with all the documents on which it securely rests. Burchett fully supports it.

to whom Rooke had committed the main boat attack at the capture of Gibraltar.[1] And not only this, for he also took the responsibility of leaving behind him a large number of the marines of his own ships and all the bread and ammunition he could safely spare. In this way Stanhope could muster two thousand six hundred men, of whom not quite half were British, and with these a landing was at once effected at the point Leake had prepared about two miles from Port Mahon. The undefended town was immediately occupied, and, having thus seen everything in a fair way to success, Leake took his leave and went home.

So difficult was the country between the landing place and the castle of St. Philip which defended the entrance of the Mahon inlet, that it was nearly a fortnight before Stanhope could cover the ground with his siege train. Whitaker employed the delay by sending two ships of the line round to seize Port Fornells on the north side of the island, in order to provide a safe retreat for the transports. The little fort was quickly reduced, and the transports were able to lie snug in a harbour almost as good as Mahon. At the same time a few hundred troops and two other vessels were detached against Ciudadela, the capital of the island. It surrendered upon summons, and thus, when Stanhope appeared before St. Philip, its defenders were already half beaten with bad news. Still it presented no easy task. The works had been recently much enlarged and strengthened, and were well armed. It was on September 17 that Stanhope's guns were able to open on the outer lines, and they quickly made an impression. In a few hours some breaches were opened, one of them opposite to where was posted a brigade under Brigadier George Wade, Stanhope's second in command and afterwards famous as the great Scottish road-maker. It had been Stanhope's intention to assault the next day, but as soon as the fire ceased Wade's grenadiers without orders rushed their breach. Seeing what was happening, Stanhope moved on in support, with the

[1] Whitaker's squadron was 18 of the line and frigates, 1 fire ship, 2 bomb-vessels, and 2 hospital ships, besides 3 Dutch ships.

result that the disheartened enemy abandoned the whole outer *enceinte* in a panic, and before night Wade was securely established on the glacis of the castle. They did not wait for more. A capitulation followed on the morrow, and Minorca, so long desired and so long feared, was thus almost miraculously in Stanhope's hands. The Carlist sympathies of the native portion of the garrison had no doubt as much to do with the success of the enterprise as the bold rapidity of Leake's and Stanhope's movements; but it was none the less a brilliant operation that should rank at least as high as the capture of Gibraltar.

From the first it was at least as highly appreciated. Marlborough, so soon as he heard of it, congratulated his importunate correspondents all round that the question of a winter squadron was now settled, and that the Pope and the Italian Princes would have to lower their tone. And this is what actually happened. True, the winter Mediterranean squadron did not yet exist. Before Leake left, Charles had begged him to order Whitaker to winter at Mahon. But, still sticking to his first position, Leake had refused on the ground that it was impossible till Mahon was properly furnished as a dockyard with all necessary naval or ordnance stores and conveniences for careening. With this Charles had to be content, but it was enough. Without troubling Whitaker to call, the Pope abandoned the French cause by solemnly recognising the Hapsburg claimant as King of Spain. To clinch matters, as soon as Stanhope's success was known at home, Sir George Byng received orders to take a squadron there with all the necessary stores, and winter in the Mediterranean. Thus not a moment was lost in reaping the full advantage of what had been gained with all the good effects that had been anticipated.

But it was not only from the point of view of the war that the conquest was regarded. Before Stanhope was well established at Mahon he had made up his mind that his prize must never go out of British hands. In announcing his success to the Queen's Government he gave it as his humble opinion that England ought never

to part with the island, since it would give the law to the Mediterranean both in peace and war. To this end he took immediate steps by astutely returning to Barcelona, in evidence of his zeal for King Charles's cause, the whole of his Spanish and Portuguese troops which he had borrowed, and retaining only his own British. The Court of Barcelona at once took alarm. It was one of the many times when France, stunned by the blows she had received, was making desperate overtures for peace, even to offering Marlborough four million livres to secure it on terms that would not completely paralyse her in the Mediterranean. That Minorca was in British hands was therefore no little cause of anxiety to the Hapsburg interest. 'Whether we have war or peace,' wrote Stanhope again in sending home Wade with despatches, 'I cannot but hope we shall think of preserving Port Mahon, and indeed the whole island. Brigadier Wade will acquaint your lordship that I have had some difficulties here about the government of it which are not yet over. Therefore I believe that it will be convenient that a commission were sent to Colonel Petit to be Lieutenant-Governor of it, and instructions never to admit any troops but English into the castle and forts.' Later he suggested that the confirmation of his arrangements should be made a condition of giving the Portuguese and Carlists the further assistance they were asking, and he never ceased to urge the strategical importance of his conquest. 'Of what consequence it is,' he wrote, 'with respect to France, Spain, Italy, and Africa, is not to be expressed,' and above all he valued it in view of a recurrence of war with the Dutch. Indeed it was the jealousy of the Dutch that was the main difficulty of its being settled as part of the British reward. Marlborough, with his wide diplomatic experience, was particularly anxious. 'It is a very ticklish point,' he wrote to Stanhope, 'and will need your greatest prudence in the management of it; for as soon as it is known, besides the improvement which the French Court and those at Madrid will endeavour to make of it to the disadvantage of King Charles, I expect to hear loudly of it from Holland for the very reasons you mention.'

Eventually Stanhope was clever enough to get his way, and England was to all intents in practical possession of all that William had thought necessary to guarantee her against the danger of a French prince on the throne of Spain. Still the peace overtures failed and the war dragged on. As blow after blow staggered Louis on his throne, and the cry of his wounded people grew beyond bearing, he again and again made almost abject bids for peace. But the allies would not listen. Every year Dutch, Hapsburg, and Carlist grew more grasping and more feeble. Every year they departed more widely from their engagements to the alliance, and more entirely left the weight of the war upon England's shoulders. That at last she grew weary both of her own war party and her obstinate allies is no matter for wonder and little for censure. Holland, from sheer exhaustion, had practically ceased to be a naval power. The war at sea had become almost entirely a British war. So far as England was concerned the victory had long been won, and when at last Louis appealed to her directly she resolved to force the allies to strike a balance.

The Congress of Utrecht was the result. Of all the terms, upon which France won the intercession of England, there were none that caused more bitter heart-burning or were more obstinately clung to than those which confirmed her in the possession of Port Mahon and Gibraltar. Above all were the Dutch disturbed. It was impossible to disguise from themselves that their century of naval and commercial rivalry with England was ending in her becoming beyond question or reach the one sea power. By securing the domination of the Mediterranean that position would be established past hope. Already in 1711, when Louis was trying to deal with the Dutch as he was now dealing with England, the Grand Pensionary had said that he was willing to treat mainly out of suspicion of what England was trying to get for herself within the Straits.[1]

So soon therefore as it was known that Louis had accepted the Queen's preliminaries the Dutch became

[1] Swift, *Last Years of Queen Anne*,

stubbornly hostile. For the Queen's conditions included not only Gibraltar and Port Mahon but the concession of the whole Spanish slave trade, the 'Asiento' as it was technically called, and large commercial privileges in the Spanish colonies. It meant the complete supremacy of England, both as a naval and a commercial power, and they strained every artifice in concert with the war party in England to wreck the negotiations. On one condition alone were they willing to withdraw their opposition, and that was that they should garrison Gibraltar and Port Mahon jointly with England and share with her the commercial rights she was to obtain.[1] The English would not listen for a moment. The House of Commons bluntly declared that ever since the year 1706 the Dutch had taken no part in maintaining or acquiring the positions which had been won in the Straits. From that time they had abandoned the war in the Peninsula, contrary to all their engagements, and had forfeited all claim to share its proceeds. Fortified with the support of the House of Commons the Queen's peace Government became more firm than ever. The British plenipotentiaries were instructed, if the Dutch persisted in the attitude they were taking, to make a separate treaty with France. 'For the Queen'—so their instructions ran—'was determined never to allow the States any share in the Asiento, Gibraltar or Port Mahon; nor could she think it reasonable that they should be upon an equal foot with her in the trade with Spain, to the conquest whereof they had contributed so little.'

The Empire was almost as hostile as the Dutch and sullenly supported their protests. A deadlock was reached, and Harley himself was sent over to break it. On the main point there was not to be an inch of concession. His instructions were 'that no extremity should make her Majesty depart from insisting to have the Asiento for her own subjects and to keep Gibraltar and Port Mahon.'[2] From this attitude her Government never flinched. The panacea which William III. had been the

[1] Bolingbroke, *Letters on the State of Europe*, No. viii.
[2] Swift, *Last Years of Queen Anne*.

first to make definitely an object of British policy was by this time thoroughly understood, and the plenipotentiaries came out at last from the Congress bearing in their hands that priceless treasure which has determined the position of England in Europe from that day to this.

So in all the pomp of a European concert the seal was set on the work which Ward, the pirate, had disreputably begun. Timorously James I. had sown the seed without knowledge of its nature, and scarcely aware that he had let it fall. Cromwell, by an instinct almost as blind, had tilled the pregnant soil, and Charles II., by a more conscious move, had brought the fruit to his lips. But all these efforts have more the colour of some unreasoned intuition for dominion, some impulse of a quickening destiny than of a real apprehension of the sources of European power. It was not till William III. brought with him for British statesmen a real feeling for continental politics, that the truth took visible shape. Once established in his island realm he was quick to see how the ships could be made to give what his battalions could not achieve. First of all men he saw that the new and unsettled national system in Europe could never be brought to a stable balance till the northern sea power was free to assert itself in the ancient basin of dominion. He saw how by that means the British frontier could be carried unassailably up to the tenderest borders of the old Mediterranean States which had been wont to give the law to Europe and to count the nations of the North Sea too distant for serious calculation. Having divined the vital secret he never lifted his eyes from the end, and in peace and war, by arms and diplomacy, he strove with unremitting effort to realise his aim.

It was not his hand that achieved it. Death called a halt and the work was carried to completion by his great disciple. When we think of all its wide results, when we see how far it went to fix the European system on its still existing lines, it seems too brilliant a jewel to add to Marlborough's crown. We shrink from believing that one human mind can have wrought so much. Yet the truth is no less. To the unsurpassed richness of his military renown we must add the greatest achievement that

British naval strategy can show. He failed, it is true, to reach the goal he marked, but by his resolute and far-sighted striving towards it, he gained all that was possible, all at least that could be permanent. His failure went to show that, for the purposes of practical strategy, France was not seriously vulnerable from the south, but it proved that with a dominant sea power well placed within the Straits her Mediterranean frontier was useless to her for offence, and that neither for her nor for any other power could the dream of the Roman Empire be revived.

This, as has been said, is after all the great political fact of the seventeenth century, and the highest claim to its parentage rests with the British sea power. It remains the abiding and perhaps the greatest attribute of the Mediterranean Sea—an attribute that has become obscured, but which is as living to-day as when the Peace of Utrecht acknowledged it. A time was coming when the Mediterranean was to have a wider meaning. As the course of European empire spread eastwards to the Indian seas, it became again the centre of the world—the place of arms which dominated the imperial movements of the following century. From that point of view it has a distinct history and a distinct import. In our day, when the European system has grown so solid that it seems as though nothing could seriously disturb it, the new meaning has almost buried the old. The world-wide empires dominate our imagination. Yet their roots still lie in the European system. If that is shaken, all will shake. The main guarantee of its stability is the British power in the Mediterranean and the general and lasting acquiescence of Europe in the situation which the Peace of Utrecht founded within the Straits is a recognition of that vital truth. The Midland Sea remains still, perhaps more than ever, the keyboard of Europe. Whatever other attributes it may have gained, that one must never be forgotten. In that lies the living reality of those men of the seventeenth century whose work we have followed. In that lies our duty, whatever distractions may arise, to keep green the memory of those old strategists who guided the hand of England to the Straits.

APPENDIX

ORIGIN OF THE LINE OF BATTLE

THE fighting instructions issued by Sir Edward Cecil in 1625 have a special interest as throwing a faint light on the origin of the line of battle, which still remains one of the unsolved problems of naval history.

The earliest instructions at present known which indicate a close-hauled line ahead as a tactical formation are those issued by Sir Walter Ralegh in 1617 for the fleet he took to Guiana.[1] It would be rash, however, to assume that they were designed by him, or that they contain the first enunciation of the principle. Fleet orders were almost invariably founded closely on previous examples. Ralegh was certainly not seaman enough to have invented an entirely new scheme; he had never even been present at a fleet action in the open; and there are many indications that the principle he adopted was used in the latter part of the reign of Elizabeth. The orders, in all probability, were the common form current at the time.

The first orders which Sir E. Cecil issued followed almost word for word those of Ralegh, which were also probably those employed by Mansell in 1620, since there is no indication that he drew up any new ones. As issued by Cecil they clearly contemplate the fleet's acting in squadrons, in so many distinct close-hauled lines ahead. The ships of each squadron were intended to follow the squadronal flag into action within musket-shot, 'giving so much liberty unto the leading ship, as, after her broadside delivered, she may stay and trim her sails; then is the second to give her broadside, and the third and fourth with the rest of the division, which done, they shall all tack as the first ship and give their other sides, keeping the enemy in a perpetual volley. This you must do upon the

[1] *S.P. Dom.* cciii. 79.

windermost ship or ships of the enemy, which you shall either batter in pieces or force him or them to bear up, and so tangle them or drive them foul one of another to their utter confusion.' On the final day of sailing, however, Cecil amplified this order by a new one, which is very remarkable. It directed that 'the whole fleet, or so many of them as shall be appointed, are to follow the leading ship within musket-shot of the enemy, and give them first their chase pieces, then their broadside, and afterwards a volley of small shot; and when the headmost ship hath done, the next ship shall observe the same course, and so every ship in order, [so] that the headmost may be ready to renew the fight against such time as the sternmost hath made an end, by that means keeping the weather of the enemy, and in continual fight until they be sunk in the sea or forced by bearing up to entangle themselves and to come [foul] one of another to their utter confusion.'

Both these orders are set out in the Journal of the 'Swiftsure,' the flagship of the Vice-Admiral Lord Essex, and are apparently the work of his captain, Sir Samuel Argall of Virginia fame, who was one of the most accomplished seamen of his time. In 1617, when Ralegh's orders were issued, he was admiral on the Virginia Station and had since commanded a ship under Mansell. The second order marks a distinct and very noteworthy advance in tactics. For the first time we have unmistakably the idea of a fleet attacking not in separate squadrons or groups, but in one column and in succession. It is clearly a rude conception of the single line ahead. But, curiously enough, having thus, by what means we know not, stumbled on the final solution of the problem, Cecil immediately abandoned it for something more to the taste of his well-drilled mind. For some reason it did not please him, and he took the first opportunity of a calm to call a council of war and submit to it a scheme that was entirely different. It had been prepared, not by Argall but by Sir Thomas Love, his own captain, whom Cecil had instructed to draw up articles embodying his ideas. The fleet had already been organised in three large squadrons, each composed of three royal ships with some five-and-twenty merchantmen and transports. The Dutch contingent was to form a fourth squadron. But beyond this nothing had been done about 'the form of a sea fight' in the event of an enemy's fleet being encountered. Under the articles which Love presented, there was to be a further sub-division. Each of the three English squadrons was to be organised in three divisions or 'sub-squadrons' of nine ships, with one of

the King's ships leading. The system of attack was also changed. For, instead of the nine vessels of the sub-squadrons attacking in succession, they were to 'discharge and fall off three and three as they were filed in the list'—that is to say, they were still to attack in succession, but in groups of three. Such an arrangement was entirely new, and thus in the same fleet we have not only the first mention of the principle of a single line ahead but also of its extreme converse, the small 'group' unit.[1]

Another noteworthy point in Love's proposal is that the Dutch were not to be bound by it. They were expressly permitted 'to observe their own order and method of fighting.' What this was is not stated, but there can be little doubt that the reference is to the boarding tactics, which the Dutch, in common with all continental navies, continued to prefer to the new English 'method' of fighting with the guns alone. The two ideas demanded wholly different tactics, and it is clear that the Dutch 'method' was already recognised as something different from that of the English. The point is important. For the fact that, in the Dutch fleet-orders at the outset of the war of 1652, there is no trace of the conception of a line ahead, or indeed of any order, has been taken as evidence that up to that time no such system can have existed in the English service. In face, however, of the above testimony, that the English and Dutch methods were different, this evidence can have little weight.[2]

So far as we have been permitted to view the scene in the council of war, the reading of Love's draft orders appears to have been received with something like derision. 'It was observed,' says the official account which Glanville drew up, 'that it intended to enjoin our fleet to advance and fight at sea, much after the manner of an army at land, assigning every ship to a particular division, rank, file, and station, which order and regularity was not only improbable but almost impossible to be observed by so great a fleet in so uncertain a place as the sea.' The first impulse was to reject the orders in mass, but Cecil stuck to his guns. The articles contained many excellent orders for sparing the men, disposing them in quarters and the like, and above all one strictly forbidding any one to open fire at more than caliber and pistol shot, and yet another prohibiting boarding without special order of the admiral, whereby was enforced the cardinal principle of Drake's school, that the ship

[1] Glanville's *Journal* (Camden Soc. 1883, p. 15 *et seq.*).

[2] Gardiner, *First Dutch War* (Navy Records Society), i. 300.

must be first and last a gun carriage. The supporters of the articles therefore pleaded that for the sake of the good in them they might stand, it being understood that generally they were to be regarded as a council of perfection and not to be strictly enforced. This, after some discussion, was agreed to, and so the articles were passed. As understood by those who had to carry it out, the 'order of fight' is thus summarised by one of Cecil's officers: 'The several admirals to be in square bodies'—that is, each squadronal flag-officer would command a division or sub-squadron formed in three ranks of three files, and they were 'to give their broadsides by threes, and so fall off. The rear-admiral to stand for a general reserve, and not to engage himself in fight without great cause.' [1]

During the next generation there is no sign of any progressive development. Even the tactical idea of Ralegh's instructions is never again enjoined. Sir William Monson, writing about the time of the Ship-money Fleets, repudiates any strict order of battle. In Lord Lindsey's 'Instructions of 1635,' article 18, which alone relates to a battle, is still in the Tudor form, and the precedent is followed in the 'Instructions given by the Right Honourable the Committee of the Lords and Commons for the Admiralty' on May 2, 1648, to Captain William Penn, rear-admiral of the Irish squadron.[2] These again contain but one reference as to what is to be done in a fight. If occasion arise to engage a hostile fleet, every captain is instructed 'to leave the vice-admiral to assail the enemy's admiral and to match yourself as equally as you can, to succour the rest of the fleet as cause shall require, not wasting your powder, nor shooting afar off, nor till you come side to side.' Thus we see that, up to the advent of the soldier-admirals, no definite battle formation was insisted on. The Elizabethan and Jacobean idea of an attack in succession seems to have been practised, but the only rule was to fight close with the guns, never to board an unbeaten ship, and to stand by your friends.

No sooner, however, had the soldiers obtained the command than we get at least an attempt at something more scientific. After the experience of one campaign of the first Dutch war, the generals-at-sea issued a set of regular fighting instructions. These are the next we have. They were signed by Blake,

[1] 'Journal of the Expedition,' *S.P. Dom.* x. 67.

[2] Lindsey's are in *Monson's Tracts*, bk. iii.; Penn's are in *Sloane MSS.* 1709, f. 55. G. Penn gives similar ones from an 'original MS.' which he dates 1647, *Life of Penn*, i. 405.

Deane, Monk, and Desborough at Portsmouth in March 1653,[1] and contain a clear restoration of the line ahead and the germ of a definite tactical system. Article 2 enjoins that at sight of the enemy's fleet the vice-admiral and the rear-admiral shall make all possible effort to come up respectively on the right and left wing of the admiral, leaving a complete distance for the admiral's squadron if the wind permit and there be room enough. Here we have a picture of the fleet bearing down in three columns at sufficient interval to allow the centre squadron space enough to haul its wind and form line parallel with the enemy, an evolution akin to the everyday military movement of advancing in column and deploying.

That a line was contemplated is clear from Article 3. It provides that as soon as the general—that is the commander-in-chief—is engaged, each squadron is 'to take the best advantage it can to engage with the enemy next unto him, and in order thereunto all the ships of every squadron shall endeavour to keep in a line with the chief, unless the chief be maimed or otherwise disabled, which God forbid. . . . Then every ship of the said squadron shall endeavour to keep in line with the admiral, or he that commands in chief next unto him nearest the enemy.' Other articles provide signals for one squadron relieving another that is 'overcharged,' and also for the fleet coming into line with the admiral under various circumstances.

It was on these instructions that the remainder of the war was fought. It is not surprising therefore that in the subsequent actions of 1653 we have the first definite statement of a formation in a single line ahead. From the Hague we have it recorded that on June 2, at the battle off the Gabbard, the first action fought after the issue of the new fighting instructions, the English 'having the wind, they stayed on a tack for half an hour until they put themselves into the order in which they meant to fight, which was in file at half cannon-shot.' The suggestion is that this was certainly not the ordinary formation of the Dutch, and there is no statement that they formed a similar order. Again, for the next battle—that of the Texel—fought on July 31 in the same year, we have the statement of Hoste's imformant, who was present as a spectator, that at the opening of the action the English, but not the Dutch, were formed in a single line close-hauled. 'Le 7 Aoust [*i.e.* N.S.],' the French gentleman says, 'je découvris l'armée de l'amiral composée de plus de cent vaisseaux de guerre. Elle était rangée

[1] *Penn's Naval Tracts, Sloane MSS.* 3232.

en trois escadrons et elle faisoit vent-arrière pour aller tomber sur les Anglois, qu'elle rencontra le même jour à peu près en pareil nombre rangez [*sic*] sur une ligne qui tenoit plus de quatre lieuës Nord-Nord-Est et Sud-Sud-Ouest, le vent étant Nord-Ouest. Le 8 et le 9 se passèrent en des escarmouches, mais le 10 on en vint à une bataille decisive. Les Anglois avoient essaié de gagner le vent: mais l'Amiral Tromp en aiant toujours conservé l'avantage, et l'étant rangé sur une ligne parallèle à celle des Anglois arriva sur eux, &c.' This is the first known instance of a Dutch fleet forming in single line, and, so far as it goes, would tend to show they adopted it in imitation of the English formation.[1]

In this connection another point must be noted. In the previous year several actions had been fought, but in no one of them can be discovered any trace of the line on either side. On the contrary, we have the distinct statement that in the last action but one of the campaign, fought between Blake and De With on September 28, the Dutch awaited the English attack, not in line or file, but 'in a close body.'[2] Three other actions were fought before the issue of the 'Fighting Instructions' of March 1653, and those were the battle of Dungeness between Blake and Tromp on November 30, 1652, that of Portland on February 18, 1653, and that of Beachy Head on the 20th. So far as fleet tactics went the two former were probably the worst-fought actions of the war. At Dungeness Blake was deserted by half his fleet, and at Portland Monk, who had a flag for the first time, was left out of action altogether. It is perfectly clear that on none of these occasions either side formed a line. It was immediately after these confused actions that the 'Fighting Instructions' were issued—immediately, that is, after Monk's first experience of naval warfare. We can easily understand how galling to his strict ideas of order and discipline the lamentable exhibition must have been. A professional soldier and martinet of a pronounced order, he was regarded at this time as perhaps the highest authority in the kingdom on the art of war, and it may well have been his influence that produced the attempt to institute a tactical system—a thing which Blake and Deane had hitherto omitted to do. We cannot be certain, but we do

[1] Hoste, *Evolutions Navales*, p. 78. Dr. Gardiner declared himself sceptical as to the genuineness of the French gentleman's narrative, mainly on the ground of certain inaccuracies of date and detail; but, as Hoste certainly believed in it, it cannot well be rejected as evidence of the main features of the action for which he used it.

[2] Captain John Mildmay's relation. Gardiner's *First Dutch War*, ii. 269.

know that it was in the next action off the Gabbard on June 2, when Monk commanded alone after Deane was killed, that we have the first indication of a definite tactical system having been attempted. That a substantial improvement was the result is certain: 'Our fleet,' says an eyewitness, 'did work together in better order than before, and seconded one another.' There is, moreover, the important testimony of a Royalist intelligencer writing from the Hague on June 9. After relating the consternation which the English gunnery and refusal to close caused in the Dutch ranks, he goes on to say: ''Tis certain that the Dutch in this fight (by the relation and acknowledgment of Tromp's express sent hither, with whom I spoke) showed very great fear and were in very great confusion, and the English (as he saith) fought in excellent order.'[1] The next action was the one which Hoste's informant described, and which an English officer present commended as 'a very orderly battle.'

It would be a mistake, however, to suppose that the efforts of the soldier-admirals to introduce the line were at once successful. Though it is pretty clear that, after the new orders of 1653, the English practice was to form a true line of battle, it is equally certain that, as a rule, it was not maintained long after the action began. The evidence from the narratives of the Cromwellian and early Restoration battles is overwhelming that the old confusion soon set in, and there is really nothing to contradict it.

The well-known passage in Pepys's 'Diary,' upon which Granville Penn founded his argument that the line was regularly used in Cromwell's time, has been shown by Dr. Gardiner to be incapable of bearing the interpretation he placed upon it.[2] Paul Hoste's definite assertion on the point is particularly strong, and the fact that he admits the first battle of the Texel began with the two fleets ranged parallel to one another in single lines only adds weight to his statement that the second battle of Texel, in 1666, was the first one in which this order was strictly maintained. In the absence, therefore, of direct evidence to the contrary, his statement will probably stand.[3] Nor does it stand alone. There is another little-known piece of testimony which thoroughly supports his assertion. It is contained in a tract published in 1702, entitled 'The Present

[1] *Clarendon MSS.* 45, f. 470.

[2] G. Penn, *Life of Sir William Penn*, i. 401; *English Historical Review*, xiii. 533; Pepys's *Diary*, July 4, 1666.

[3] *Evolutions Navales*, pp. 42, 78.

Condition of the English Navy set forth in a Dialogue betwixt Young Fudg of the Admiralty and Captain Steerwell, an Oliverian Commander.'[1] They are discussing the comparative merits of the present and the Cromwellian time, much to the disadvantage of the former. Fudg, worsted at every point, at last in desperation claims that anyhow the modern system of tactics is better than the old. 'What,' he asks, 'is your opinion of fighting in line?' 'I don't approve of it at all,' Steerwell replies. 'We never used it, and I think we fought desperately, and did as good service as any that succeeded us. I'll give you my reasons against your line. When the fleets engage in a line, supposing the admiral's post to be in the centre and the fight be begun by the windward squadron, the ship first begun can only be supported by its second; for the admiral, by reason of the smoke, cannot see how to send her convenient succour, for signals are useless soon after the commencement of the action. Now, when we fought without a line, every one made the best of his way to engage the enemy. We looked for no signals, but when we saw one of our ships overcharged by the enemy we immediately bore down to her assistance; and if we saw one of our own ships grappled by a fireship we came immediately to her assistance, and, after we had cleared her, we sheered off and stood away to the best advantage.' He then cites La Hogue as an instance of the inflexibility of the line preventing a complete victory. 'For my part,' says Fudg, 'I don't understand fighting, but it is a strange thing that the navy officers of all nations should be mistaken in the politic part of fighting.' 'For my part,' answers Steerwell, 'I never saw fighting in line; but this I am certain of, that, if our officers are right in their method of fighting, they don't manage their tacks to the best advantage,' meaning they are too ready to haul out of action.

The evidence of this dialogue is not of course incontestable. We cannot be certain of its authenticity; still, the whole tone of it suggests that it may well have been written by a man who had served in his youth in the Cromwellian navy.

For the fleet of Penn and Venables that went to the West Indies, a set of 'Fighting Instructions' practically identical with those of 1653 was signed by Blake, Monk, Desborough, and Penn on March 31, 1655, and we may take it as certain that they were the same that were used by Blake and Montague off the coast of Spain in the same war, although no copy of them

[1] *Brit. Mus.* 533. d. 2: a volume of naval tracts.

seems to be known.[1] What makes it certain that these instructions represent the last word of the Cromwellians is that they were adopted for the second Dutch war under Charles II., and formed the basis of those under which it was fought.

This fact, which has a most important bearing on the whole question, rests on the secure basis of the 'Sea Book' of the 'Royal Charles,' the flag-ship of the Duke of York, which still exists among the invaluable navy papers of Lord Dartmouth. The first 'Fighting Instructions' that it contains, which we may presume were largely inspired by Sir William Penn, his Captain of the Fleet, are practically identical with those of 1653 and 1655. They are not dated, but are immediately followed by three 'Additional Instructions' which further emphasise the importance of endeavouring to keep a single line. These are dated April 10, 1665. Then follow a set of 'Sailing Instructions,' dated November 16, 1666, and these again are followed by a further set of 'Additional Instructions to be observed in the next fight.' This last set contain further directions for keeping the line and, for the first time, instructions for a tactical movement for cutting the enemy's line and concentrating on the isolated portion. They also introduce an article imposing the penalty of death upon a commander who, being out of the line, endeavours to fire over it at the enemy.

These new provisions are clearly from their position in the 'Sea Book' not earlier than the 'Sailing Instructions' of Nov. 16, 1666. This enables us to fix the date of the famous 'Fighting Instructions' of the Duke of York, upon which it is usually supposed the second Dutch war was fought. For these 'Instructions' incorporate the second set of 'Additional Instructions,' and were therefore subsequent to Nov. 16, 1666. As no action was fought after that date it is clear we must regard the war as having been fought under Blake's and Monk's 'Instructions' of 1653, as amplified by the 'Additional Instructions' of April 1665.[2]

Summing up the general results of this series of 'Instructions'

[1] G. Penn, *Life of Penn*, ii. 76, where Penn's orders are set out in full.

[2] It is unnecessary here to set out the articles in detail, as it is intended to publish the whole of them in a forthcoming volume of the Navy Records Society, at whose disposal Lord Dartmouth has kindly placed the originals, and by whose courtesy I have been permitted to see them. A copy of the complete set of 'Instructions' will be found in Granville Penn's *Life of Penn*, ii. 605. Another and amplified set is among the *Dartmouth MSS.* countersigned 'W. Wren,' who was secretary to the Duke of York from 1667 to 1672. This is probably the final form. Copies of all the earlier sets are also in *Harleian MSS.* 1247, but in some chronological confusion.

we may say, firstly, that the close-hauled line ahead appears to have been a gradual and normal development, starting in Elizabethan times, halting during the period of peace between Charles I.'s war and the Commonwealth, and revived and solidified when the soldier-admirals brought their instincts for a tactical system to bear upon naval warfare.

Secondly, that although the line was conceived as a tactical system in the first Dutch war, its advocates were not able to enforce it till practice and experience, about the end of the second war, had produced minds that believed in it and the skill to use it. This is all that can safely be extracted from the famous conversation between Penn and Pepys about the 'Four-Days' Battle' in the first week of June 1666. The passage in the 'Diary' is as follows: 'Sir William Penn came to me and we talked of the late fight. He says we must fight in line, whereas we fight promiscuously to our utter and demonstrable ruin, the Dutch fighting otherwise, and we whenever we beat them.' The inference is clearly, not that the Dutch fought in line and that we did not, but that, although the line was known and approved by such men as Penn, it was observed in some actions and not so well in others, owing to the fact, as Penn himself explained, 'that our very commanders, nay our very flag officers, do stand in need of exercising amongst themselves and discoursing the business of commanding a fleet.'

It must also be remembered that Penn was not present at the battle, and that after all this is only Pepys's gossipy report of what he said. It could not in any case stand against the clear and direct testimony we have that the battle was fought in line. We know from the official narrative that, as the enemy were sighted, Monk made the signal for 'line of batalia,' and we have a contemporary plan showing the two fleets engaged in parallel single lines.[1] We also know that it was in this very battle that Armand de Gramont, Comte de Guiche, was so deeply impressed with the beauty of the English line. 'Sur les six heures du matin,' he says of the second day's proceedings, 'nous aperçûmes la flotte des Anglois qui revenoit dans un ordre admirable; car ils marchent par le front comme seroit une armée de terre, et quand ils approchent ils s'étendent et tournent leurs bords pour combattre, parce que le front à la mer se fait par le bord du vaisseau.' Again, later on he says: 'Rien n'égale le bel ordre et la discipline des Anglois: que jamais ligne n'a été tirée plus droite que celle que leurs vaisseaux forment.' He further makes

[1] See 'Narrative' and the plan entitled 'A Model of the Fleets as they were drawn up to fight' in *Add. MSS.* 32094, f. 137.

it clear that the Dutch captains neither approved nor observed the rigid line, believing that a looser formation gave a better chance for their boarding tactics. Later on in the action, however, he says that 'De Ruyter de son côté appliqua toute son industrie pour donner une meilleure forme à sa ligne . . . . Enfin par ce moiën nous nous remîmes sur une ligne parallèle à celle des Anglois.' Guiche himself had no doubt as to which was the better system. In his final criticism of the actions he says: 'A la vérité l'ordre admirable de leur armée doit toujours être imité et pour moi je sais bien que si je étois dans le service de mer, et que je commandasse des vaisseaux du roi, je songerais à battre les Anglois par leur propre manière et non pas avec celle des Hollandais et de nous autres, qui est de vouloir aborder.' It is abundantly clear therefore that Guiche at any rate regarded the new line of battle as an English device to develop to the utmost their favourite method of fighting—that is, crushing the enemy by gunfire—as opposed to the boarding tactics adopted by all other nations.[1]

We are further entitled to assume that the new battle formation arose out of the 'Fighting Instructions' of 1653, since we now know that it was under these 'Instructions' as amended by the Duke of York the battle that Guiche describes was fought, and that it was also under them was fought the battle of June 3, 1665, off the Texel, at which Hoste says the battle order of two opposing parallel lines close-hauled 'fut exactement gardé pour la première fois.'

Finally we may say that the oft-repeated assertion that the line ahead was invented by the Dutch and copied from them by the English does not rest on any shred of direct evidence that has yet been produced. The impression appears to have arisen from reading into Penn's remarks to Pepys something that he certainly did not say, and disregarding something that he did say. Against any such interpretation of Penn's meaning we have firstly all the direct testimony given above that the English were at least attempting to fight in a strict line when the Dutch were still content with their old scrambling group tactics, and secondly the unimpeachable fact that Tromp's orders of June 20, 1652, contain no reference whatever to a line of battle but only to subdivisional groups.[2]

The belief that the organisation of fleets into squadrons

[1] *Mémoires du Comte de Guiche concernant les Provinces-Unies des Pays-Bas, etc., servant de supplément à ceux d'Aubry du Maurier et du Comte d'Estrades*, pp. 249, 251, 255, 266, London, 1744.

[2] Gardiner's *First Dutch War*, i. 321.

was also a Dutch invention is still more difficult to account for. Even Dr. Gardiner, whose caution in dealing with naval tactics is exemplary, shared it. 'The division into three squadrons,' he says, 'which had been first displayed in the battle off Portland (Feb. 1653), was imitated from the Dutch practice.'[1] Yet nothing is more certain than that the division into three or more squadrons had been employed in every English fleet of sufficient size for a century at least, and in every large Mediterranean fleet from time immemorial. Apart from this it is certain that Blake's fleet in 1652 was divided into the usual three squadrons, under the admiral, vice-admiral, and rear-admiral. In Vice-Admiral Penn's letter to an intelligence officer of the Council of State, dated October 2, relating to the action off the Kentish Knock, he says: 'Our General not having above three of his squadron . . . and I with most of my squadron very near him, I sent to know of the General if I should leave him and bear up among the enemy with my squadron.' And again: 'We ran a fair berth ahead of our General to give room for my squadron to lie between him and us.'[2] It is possible that Dr. Gardiner was thinking of the ninefold division which was established by the 'Fleet Orders' of January 1653. By these orders each of the three usual squadrons was assigned its distinguishing flag—red, blue, and white respectively—and each was divided into three sub-divisions under their respective admirals, vice-admirals, and rear-admirals. Such an organisation was of course peculiarly well adapted to the group system of the Dutch, and may possibly have been adopted directly from them. We know, at any rate, that Tromp had organised his fleet on this system as early as June 20, 1652. Still it may be doubted whether even this idea was purely Dutch, since, as we have seen, Sir Edward Cecil attempted to introduce a similar system of 'sub-squadrons' as early as 1625.

[1] *Commonwealth and Protectorate*, ii. 329, and cf. 156.

[2] Gardiner's *First Dutch War*, i. 276. For the squadronising of Henry VIII.'s fleet in 1545 see *Drake and the Tudor Navy*, i. 51 *et seq.*; for that of 1588, *ibid.* ii. 177–8, 244–6; for that of Drake and Norreys in 1589, *ibid.* 324–6. For the first use of squadronal flags in 1596, *Naval Miscellany* (Navy Records Soc.), i. 28 *et seq.*

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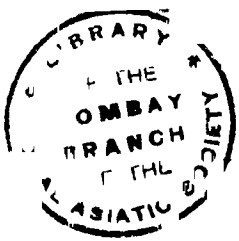

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